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ABSTRACT

These six theme issues of the "English Leadership Quarterly" represent those published during 1997 and part of 1998--volume 19 consists of the traditional four issues, while volume 20 consists of only two issues because of a change in publication schedule. Articles in volume 19 number 1 deal with theories, issues, and personal accounts on the individual, group, situational, and ethical dimensions of leadership, and are: "Leadership and the Time Warp of Rapid Change" (Barbara E. Kovach); "Department Meetings: The Creation of a Collaborative Culture" (Alyce Hunter); "A Student-Directed Performance Assessment" (Ronald T. Sion); and "Snowboarding" (a humorous story gleaned from Rick Chambers' plane ride home from a scholarly conference). Articles in volume 19 number 2 address linking teachers, schools, and communities and are: "Integrating Service Learning into the Composition Curriculum" (Ann Watters and Marjorie Ford); "Linguistic Diversity in the Peer Response Group (Patricia B. Wachholz); "Developing Integrated Language Arts Standards, K-12" (Regina G. Chatel); and "Cultivating a Climate for Literacy" (Ruth Townsend). Articles in volume 19 number 3 consider the promise and paradox of technology in the English classroom and are: "Plugging Technology into the English Curriculum" (Mary L. McNabb, Gilbert Valdez, Claudette Rasmussen, and Jeri Nowakowski); "Of Paradox and Partnership" (Janet M. Beyersdorfer); "Getting the Most from Email: High School and College Students Respond to Literature" (Helen Dale and Carla Traun); and "Toward an Appropriate Technology in Education" (Ronald T. Sion). Articles in volume 19 number 4 address alternative ways of evaluating and are: "The Professional Development Portfolio: Thinking Through Teacher Assessment" (Nancy Hennessy); "Alternative Approaches to Evaluation" (Kathy Sanford); "Using the Process Approach to Improve Preservice Students' Attitudes toward Writing" (Mary Catherine Cole); and "Breakfast Club: Students Come Hungry to Learn" (Don C. Pair). Articles in volume 20 number 1 address leadership and are: "Talking about Our Talk: An

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Alternative Sociological Perspective" (Jane Lord); "Leadership and Reform: Morphing the Metaphor" (Collett B. Dilworth); and "Leadership in the Outback: An Experiment with Tutoring in the University Extension" (Roger Ochse). The volume 20 number 2 issue deals with dimensions of leadership and contains: "Breaking the Bonds of Time: Block Scheduling as a Pathway to Change" (Kathleen Siegfried); "Teacher Portfolios and the Teacher of English: A Natural Combination" (Alyce Hunter); and "Floating" (James Kennedy). (RS)

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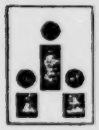

IN THIS ISSUE

Leadership and Doing Things Differently

by Henry Kiernan, editor

Long ago I worked with a high school principal whose favorite line was "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." It became the hallmark of his administration. When a teacher would discuss implementing a new initiative, the principal would say, "I'll get back to you," which we learned was just a euphemism for "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Yet the underlying premise of this leadership style denied creativity, crippled attempts to try new ideas, and routinized school culture to the degree of prompting several staff members to leave the school and some to quit the profession.

For those of us who remained, we learned to become entrepreneurs. One coping strategy was to include the study of leadership in the curriculum. From the results of our end-of-the-year student survey, Leadership Studies was always the favorite unit, and the favorite reading was "Letter from Birmingham Jail," by Martin Luther King Jr. This work in the philosophy of nonviolent resistance offers many opportunities to discuss such topics as charisma, communication, leadership style, conflict resolution, discrimination, and interdependence. It also provides a powerful example of how leaders "do things differently."

Barbara Kovach introduced me to the "doing things differently" dimension of leadership. As part of the doctoral requirements at Rutgers, we had to include six graduate credits in courses outside the School of Education. A friend recommended Barbara's Leadership Institute, sponsored by the School of Business, and I have been hooked ever since.

I am pleased to include Barbara's reflections on leadership and responsibility, reflections which are shared by this issue's other authors. Alyce Hunter proposes several methods to increase shared ownership and collaboration within an English department; Ron Sion offers strategies for students to play a more active leadership role in the learning process; and Rick Chambers ends the issue with a humorous story gleaned from his plane ride home after a CEL conference.

Our authors present theories, issues, and personal accounts on the individual, group, situational, and ethical dimensions of leadership. The challenge of leadership is to encourage each other to do things differently and to possess the courage to "fix it" even if it "ain't broke."

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Leadership and the Time Warp of Rapid Change

by Barbara E. Kovach, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey

The experience of living with tremendous economic and social change has placed all of us in a time warp where our emotional selves frequently reside in the past and our cognitive selves tentatively and occasionally confront a new reality (Kovach, 1996). We are caught between the old and the new and often are unaware of the sources of the resulting tension.

The sources of the time warp lie in our environment and most frequently can be traced to three recent changes which have revolutionized the way we think about ourselves and our organizations: (1) The economic picture has changed drastically as America moved from having a monopoly of world goods to competing with other countries for these same resources and outlets. (2) The introduction of technology has changed the nature of required skills, the numbers of people required for specific tasks, and the speed with which tasks are performed. (3) Sociocultural changes have led all employees to form new expectations about the workplace so that personal satisfaction is now a variable in the decision to work productively, whereas in earlier times it was not.

The result of these uncertainties is that (1) there is a need for new directions in all functional areas; (2) individuals at all levels of organizations are being asked to assume more responsibilities; and (3) those who are rising to leadership positions in this environment are different in style and orientation from those who managed in the last decades.

We are now asking for leaders to create new paths, not for managers to maintain existing ones. Alvin Ibffler describes the situation dramatically: "When so great a wave of change crashes into the society and the economy, traditional managers, accustomed to operating in safer waters, are typically thrown overboard. The habits of a lifetime-the very habits that helped them succeed-now become counterproductive .... Indeed, the first rule of survival is clear: nothing is more dangerous than yesterday's success" (1985, p. xi).

As managers, educators, and consultants, we each hare a responsibility for creating the climate which encourages the development of leadership potential in all with whom we come in contact.

Characteristics of Leaders

Clearly, we must begin to define the characteristics of the required leadership so that we may better develop the talents latent in existing managers. We must know what characteristics are necessary and how to improve the odds that these will emerge. As managers, educators, and consultants, we each have a responsibility for creating the climate which encourages the development of leadership potential in all with whom we come in contact.

We know already that leaders have been described as possessing a number of characteristics. Leaders are seen as optimistic, persistent, curious, and having wide-ranging interest (Wrapp, 1985, p. 12), having both vision and an ability to pay attention to detail (Peters and Waterman, 1985, p. 287), and as being risk-takers who may even seek out positions of risk and danger (Zaleznik, 1983, pp. 129-30).

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists, supervisors, coordinators, and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

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In addition, leaders are both analyzers and conceptualizers: their "most significant contribution may be that [they] can see relationships which no one else has seen" (Wrapp, 1985, p. 12). In fact, conceptual skill may be the most important "ingredient of the administrative process" (R.L. Katz, quoted in Wrapp, 1985, pp. 26-27). However, this listing of descriptive characteristics does not tell us how best to develop leaders or how to create the climate in which they are most likely to emerge.

Developing Leaders-in-Place

I work primarily with two groups of people. The first are those on the leading edge of this time warp and who are experiencing in high relief the tensions emanating from having one foot in the past and one in the present as it is defined by a vision of the future. The second group are managers and university students who are being called (I believe) to act differently in their worlds so as to be ready for the tensions of living in the time warp.

Generally, this second group, which may be said to represent the vast majority of educated Americans, do not know they live in a time warp and are not so conscious of the tensions created by our day and age. Yet they struggle with the incongruities that they experience both within themselves and in their world as they conduct their daily affairs and make projections into the future. The lessons of those consciously living in the time warp and successfully conducting their affairs at the top of American institutions are applicable to the others with whom I work. However, they are not applicable without translation.

My students frequently see the people who are living on the edge as "stuffed suits," knowing little that relates to their world. "They," the more articulate students assume, "were never 21, they don't understand 'real life,' but understand things only from the pinnacle of power, where," they imagine, "everything is easy and the way is paved for them." Managers and those at work in other organizational settings may be more sophisticated and thus more reluctant to voice this sentiment, but it resides in them as well.

Occasionally, when listening to someone urging them to "do something differently," they may voice this sentiment by saying, "Well, that's OK from where they sit [in a place where they may take extended vacations and do no real work, which is implicit in their comment], but that has no application to my life, where I am constrained by a difficult boss, sometimes uncooperative co-workers, and a host of pressures too numerous to name."

And yet the lessons from those living on the edge are absolutely applicable to all of us. We may be held back from seeing what the situation truly is by our distance from action or our lack of involvement in the multilayered complexity of how we choose to move forward in this world. We may, in fact, be in a situation where we see less clearly, and the consequences of so seeing are of lesser magnitude than for those nearer the center of action. Yet exactly the same influences work upon all of us.

We can learn from those who are in a position where they must see the forces that others of us are allowed to ignore or disguise. Yet our desire to ignore and disguise the forces that will ultimately affect us allows us to believe that the messages from those on the leading edge have no applicability to us. The difference is not in principle or in applicability but rather in the ability to cushion the impact of current forces on our lives.

The beliefs that lie at the heart of our actions must be clarified, for if they remain implicit and therefore unknown, we have no power to change them.

For those on the leading edge, the cushions have been removed. We would do well to learn from them. Those on the edge are "leaders-in-place," and we all have the option of acting as leaders in our spheres and guiding others through the thicket of issues created by living in an unprecedented time of change (Kovach, 1994).

Living on the Edge

Those who have confronted the imperative to "do things differently" confront today many issues still lurking in the future for others. In our work lives, many of us have examined assumptions about what constitutes success, aligning our definitions more closely with current realities. In our family lives, similarly, we have questioned our assumptions about marriage and child rearing and struggle with decisions about what is best for all the people involved. Frequently, when we dare to be honest, the answers, and thus our lives, depart

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from conventional thinking about what the best solution is. In doing this, we have struggled with the tension between our images from the past and our knowledge of current realities. In doing this, sometimes we have succeeded in bringing together what many think of as opposites or paradoxes and have chosen to explore alternatives that are contrary to the commonly accepted solutions of a past time.

The Explicit and the Implicit

As most people have lived their lives, they have allowed many of their basic assumptions to remain implicit, outside of their awareness. Yet many of us committed to guiding the changes that are occurring cannot afford to do this. If we are to join others as "leaders-in-place," we must increase our awareness so that what we believe is explicit rather than implicit. The beliefs that lie at the heart of our actions must be clarified, for if they remain implicit and therefore unknown, we have no power to change them. Only by making them clear to ourselves are we able to examine them, reject or retain them, in part or in whole, as we choose the best course for our time.

Further, our beliefs and values must be communicated to others with whom we work and live so that they may join us on our journey. In our work and home relationships, nothing can be assumed. For much that we assume—allow to remain implicit—may keep us attached to the past and prevent us from living in the present where we may carve out our own future. In one sense, we are required to bring together our explicit and implicit assumptions, examining those which are implicit and thereby transforming them into explicit assumptions.

The Inside and the Outside

A related pair of opposites encompasses what we say we believe-the outside-and what we actually believe and do-the inside. Bringing together the inside and the outside is referred to in common corporate parlance as "walking the talk." Reports from many quarters say that we have much trouble doing this. We know what the appropriate response is in terms of current reality, and yet we continue to act as we have in the past. Connecting what we think and how we behave is not easy to do. It is easier by far to say what we think others want to hear and go on acting as we choose, as we have before. Yet one definition of integrity is to say the same thing with all parts of ourselves. This requires, however, that we examine our behavior and our words and allow ourselves to recognize the frequent disparity between the two.

In doing this, we are likely to become both more aware and more verbal about the times when we fail to do this. We become more likely to report times when we failed "to walk the talk." We become more open to assessing and communicating our shortcomings to others. This does not mean that we necessarily have more shortcomings. This leads to one last set of polarities apparent in "lives on the edge of change."

Ups and Downs

Those of us "living on the edge" are thus likely to become more descriptive of our joys-and our disappointments. As a result, to some it appears as if we may have more disappointments than others, or that we complain more

The result of facing the conflicts of the time warp in which we all live is that we do things differently than many people.

than others who have implicit beliefs that lead them to put on a "good face" to the world and even to themselves. Thus they may withhold complaints, stifle disappointments, and fail to examine the beliefs and assumptions that underlie them. This is a result of failing to connect the inside and the outside and of allowing many beliefs and assumptions to remain implicit. Our willingness to talk about times of disappointment or confusion does not mean that either disappointment or confusion is pervasive in our lives, but rather that we struggle to stay in touch with reality in both its ups and downs.

Doing Things Differently

The result of facing the conflicts of the time warp in which we all live is that we do things differently than many people. Another way of saying this is that we are not bound to continue past behaviors. One associate refers to the way that most of us respond quickly to new data as a "knee-jerk" reaction. By this, he means we respond instinctively without thinking. In doing so, we rely on implicit values, those of which we may not be consciously aware. We respond with old behaviors, learned (and perhaps appropriately) in past situations. Yet in a rapidly changing

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world, yesterday's solution is frequently not today's answer. When we respond in a knee-jerk way, we are not acting in the present and we are, in fact, acting as if things were the same as ten or twenty or thirty years ago. Clearly, our information is that things are different, both at work and at home.

Thus to do things differently means that we must distinguish between the past and the present. We must make explicit our implicit values and priorities and test them in today's world. In doing this, we give ourselves the choice of bringing together the "outside" and the "inside," acting as whole people, with actions based on our inner integrity. We also stay in touch with our own experience, recognizing and honoring the place of both the "ups" and the "downs" in our life journeys. This is the path of those who "do things differently" not out of rebellion or disaffection, but as a conscious choice in which we confront the issues before us as they exist today in a rapidly changing universe.

In general, to do things differently in pursuit of a positively valued goal requires several things of people: (1) a clear-eyed look at the current reality; (2) an awareness of the desired vision; and (3) a willingness to break away from past practices and beliefs to reach toward a more promising future. To do this, we must be willing to confront and evaluate ourselves in the present, assess current strengths and shortcomings, envision a better way of being, use and acquire essential skills in working with others, and accept the consequences of leaving the familiar for that which is only possible. At the core of this set of behaviors is self-responsibility. The result is leadership. Both responsibility and leadership entail behaviors that exist, sometimes in an embryonic state, in all of us.

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Department Meetings: The Creation of a Collaborative Culture

by Alyce Hunter, West Windsor Plainsboro Middle School, Plainsboro, New Jersey

Picture a department meeting where teachers arrive eager to actively participate, where no one asks to be excused because of a personal emergency, and where some even linger to continue animated discussions about teaching strategies and curriculum long after the meeting's allotted time. At this same imaginary gathering, a member of the department distributes the agenda that the group has collaboratively prepared, another teacher begins and continues the meeting, someone else provides refreshments, and another person helps the group to summarize and evaluate the meeting's success. It is difficult to figure out who is the department chair-head-supervisor because all are part of a cooperative, collaborative group whose purpose is to help each other learn about learning and teaching.

A department chair can be instrumental in changing traditional department meetings into this type of collaborative adult learning experience by providing staff members with the time, support, and validation necessary to become personally involved in their own professional growth and in that of their teaching peers. A first step toward building a collaborative culture can be provided by giving the department members control and therefore ownership of the meeting hours required by contract or tradition. At the opening meeting of the school year, teachers are charged with designing ten hours of department meetings. They can choose to allocate these hours in various ways-an hour each month or two or three hours one month and cancel other meetings, and so forth. Teachers can plan their meetings to accommodate the personal and graduate schedules of one another. During this opening meeting, the department chair serves as facilitator by reminding the group of the goals and objectives of the department, school, and district and suggesting possible guest speakers, meeting

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The process and product of. collaborative department meetings undergo transformation and growth as the staff members and the administrator become more comfortable with the change.

strategies, or professional readings. Providing teachers with the opportunity to create their own department meetings can meet with resistance. Some teachers, at the beginning of the process, might feel resentful because they believe that it is the department chair's job to plan and coordinate meetings. Other administrators might question how the department will find out about needs and the principal's announcements as they arise during the year. The latter is an easy problem to solve. Messages can be distributed in written memos, or each meeting's agenda can contain the infamous "other" category to accommodate such needs and announcements. Additionally, the initial success of this collaborative planning and implementation model for meetings has lessened the concern of some teachers about the responsibility and their accountability for the meetings.

The process and product of collaborative department meetings undergo transformation and growth as the staff members and the administrator become more comfortable with the change. During the first year, teachers primarily planned activities within the one-hour once-a-month framework. For example, they asked the media specialist to discuss current books. However, they also planned a two-hour meeting with the special service staff to discuss inclusion strategies. During the second year, the staff planned and implemented a two-hour dinner meeting that focused on assessment. This meeting involved peer sharing of experiences with alternatives such as portfolios. Additionally, the teachers expanded the media presentation to include technological resources. They invited an outside speaker from The Holocaust Commission.

During the third year, the collaborative staff, having endured a particularly hard winter the previous year, decided that they would eliminate convening in January and March and planned extended meetings during November and April because they did not want to give up the meeting time that now had become so important to them as professionals. By the third year, the staff even saw the need for a meeting to discuss ordering additional books and supplies and to make decisions about summer curriculum work. Also, the department chose, at times, to meet as the whole group and, at other times, to convene as subgroups of the whole. For example, everyone attended the workshop on assessment; the next month the staff met in small groups by grade level to discuss developing grade-level rubrics for writing. This sample of a year's department meeting agendas indicates a variety of medium-risk activities such as sharing best lessons and curriculum articulation; planning professional development sessions such as inviting guest speakers from the school, the district, and outside sources; and sharing professional articles. High-risk activities consisted, among others, of analyzing methods of assessment and participating in collaborative research projects. A sample year's work of department meeting topics developed by the staff is as follows:

September (1 hour): Reexamining the department's mission statement, setting departmental goals for the year, planning meetings
October (1 hour): Sharing successful practices used for assessment, comments on professional articles on assessment (distributed before the meeting), refining the departmental rubric on "booktalking" *November* (2-hour dinner meeting): Listening to a guest speaker from the United States Holocaust Museum to provide an update on the state-mandated curriculum and resources of the museum

Building among the staff members the conditions of comfort, trust, and risk needed to function as part of this model is not an easy task.

December (1 hour): Collaborating with social studies teachers to discuss concerns about interdisciplinary instruction (related to Holocaust education and other issues)
January: No meeting
February (1 hour): Segments of the department (teachers who teach the same course or grade level) discussing practices and needs
March: No meeting
April (2 hours): Reflecting on and discussing previous meetings; adopting the departmental rubric on "booktalking"; sharing concerns and comments about language arts instruction in the building and in general with the principal
May (1 hour): Ordering supplies and books, straightening out the book room, and deciding summer curriculum work needs
June (1 hour): Reporting on staff members' action research on

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student grouping, reflecting on the year's work as a department

The collaborative model for department meetings has had many benefits for the teachers, the department chair, and the entire school. For the first time, the teachers feel that the meetings are time well spent on issues and concerns that directly relate to what and how they teach. They actually have the time and the vehicle (the meeting) to talk about their personal strategies, to listen to their teaching peers, and to feel ownership of the real and paper curricula.

For the department chair, the collaborative model for department meetings allows the opportunity to model the role of a facilitator. Building among the staff members the conditions of comfort, trust, and risk needed to function as part of this model is not an easy task. At first, members of the department might complain that they are already too busy doing the real work of teaching the students and might indicate resentment because they feel they are doing the "boss's job" of departmental coordination. In this case, a perceptive department chair could begin "small" by asking for input on the agenda for two or three meetings and, after the success of these meetings, pursue more collaborative planning and implementation for the following school year.

A department chair might feel reluctance or apprehension about adopting this model because, as with all cooperative and collaborative learning experiences, it involves a shifting of control and power from one person to the whole group. Will the department engage in productive goal setting and follow-up activities? Will the meetings become unfocused gossip sessions about curriculum, staff, students, or administrators? The adoption of the collaborative model for department meetings is not a complete abdication of responsibility, but rather a new perspective on the role of the department chair. The chief benefit is that this model allows for actualizing the cooperative learning maxim: "The whole is greater than the sum of the parts." Department members learn from and about each other. The chair becomes the "guide on the side" who coordinates and helps to create a welcoming environment for cooperation and collaboration. It is appropriate for the "guide on the side" to remind department members that district objectives or goals, state mandates such as core curriculum, or school priorities such as site-based management need to be considered and discussed during the meetings.

Finally, for the entire school, this collaborative model can be the first step toward or a reinforcement of a collaborative school culture. In this congenial, cooperative, and collaborative school, each member, whether teacher, parent, or administrator, feels responsible for the others and their learning. The members of the language arts department who feel ownership in the planning, implementation, and outcomes of their own department's meetings and activities can be the standard-bearers who can and will convince others of the feasibility, acceptability, and benefits of cooperation and collaboration.

A Student Directed Performance Assessment

by Ronald T. Sion, St. Raphael Academy, Pawtucket, Rhode Island

According to *Webster's New International Dictionary*, a leader is "a person or animal who goes before to guide or show the way or one who precedes or directs in some action, opinion or movement" (1992, p. 1405). "A pioneer should have imagination, should be able to enjoy the idea of things more than the things themselves," observes the omniscient narrator of Willa Cather's engrossing tale O *Pioneers!* (1993, p. 19). Hence, a true leader or pioneer is one who acts as an initiator, a conductor, or a guide.

In any field of endeavor, the leader is the one who has examined the ways things have been done, questioned the rationale and validity behind them, and searched for improvements. Leaders are often those willing to take risks, to explore the unknown, to commit themselves to the new rather than comfortably remaining in the old and traditional, never accepting the explanation that "that's the way it has always been done."

True leaders in the educational world have struggled for some time with the methods used to assess a student's performance. If learning is what we are truly trying to measure, is this ever an attainable goal? Neil Postman has asked if a quantitative value can

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be given to "human thoughts" and if we are actually attempting to process, when scrutinized closely, is somewhat bizarre. Therefore, it may be rightfully argued that only the learner is able to accurately assess the quantity or quality of knowledge and skill attained. By the very nature of the educational profession, many of us assume leadership roles in one capacity or another throughout the day. All of us, in one way or another, are required to assess the level of learning that has taken place within our classrooms by

Leaders are often those willing to take risks, to explore the unknown, to commit themselves to the new rather than comfortably remaining in the old and traditional, never accepting the explanation that "that's the way it has always been done."

providing individual grades. In the context of the true definition of a leader in the world of education who is entrusted with a sometimes nebulous tool for measuring learning, how many of us are sincerely willing to live up to the core of a leader's defined role by standing back, providing guidance, and empowering the learner with control over his or her assessment? This was the central issue before the teachers involved in the innovative student-directed assessment which follows.

The Setting

On Wednesday, August 31, 1994, a class of ninth graders, predominately 14 years of age, entered their classroom on the third floor of the east building of St. Raphael Academy. "Saints" is a private, diocesan secondary school, grades 9 through 12, in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Because it is a regional school, the students come from many cities and towns throughout Rhode Island, with most residing in areas north of the school. Students arrive at Saints from both public and private elementary schools. Admittance is by application and an entrance test, but few students are turned away. On this first day of school, the group of assembled freshmen was representative of a new incoming class at the academy, a tradition that has been uninterrupted for more than 70 years. With this stated, nothing else about the class had any precedent.

This was a class called Humanities 801, a subject that had never previously been offered at the school. The number of students assigned to each section of Humanities 801 was at least twice the number normally assigned to any other class at the school. These students were heterogeneously grouped in an environment where the majority of youngsters were homogeneously placed. The class was to be taught by a team of teachers rather than by one person, and they would be given a common planning period for this special program. The class was to meet daily for 102 minutes, double the time of a traditional period.

Walls had been knocked down to accommodate the class size and to allow for work areas within the classroom. New computers with CDROMs had been installed across the hall from the classroom; one computer was portable and could be hooked up to the television monitors to project computer programs within the class. Two televisions with VCR capabilities were strategically positioned on walls in the front of the classroom.

The syllabus of Humanities 801 was to focus on multicultural studies, with portfolio assessment constituting a major portion of the grade. Cooperative learning was to be a common trait. Most important, the class was interdisciplinary, blending English, social studies, fine arts, and computer literacy in its curriculum. Students were to receive one grade and 21/2 credits for their year of study, a concept not achieved at the time at any other secondary school in the state of Rhode Island. Assessments were to connect all of these disciplines.

I volunteered to be a member of one of the teams after having facilitated a study group that proposed the initial concept, which met with the approval of the principal. The team worked together for seven months, including the summer, to plan the program and was eager to get started.

One Year Later

A number of positive changes were implemented as the program entered its second year. A third section was added to reduce the number of students in each class (although the team members lost the planning period as a compromise). The computer literacy component was removed from the program for logistical reasons, thereby reducing the number of credits by 1/2. And the teams' members swapped the individuals with whom they were previously working. My team decided to structure its program thematically under four major

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headings: Self-Portrait, Decisions/Decisions, Group Portrait, and Fairness (Justice). Centered on these themes under the umbrella of a multicultural syllabus were all literary works, social studies components, and papers; oral reports, debates, and homework; art and music projects, field trips, and activities; and assessments.

Each student was provided with two file folders which were housed in storage crates, one labeled "Working Files" and the other "Portfolios." Every piece of written documentation and assessment created by the students was filed in their working folders. Papers were never returned directly to the students in class, thus eliminating a distracting paper shuffle during class time. Because no papers left the classroom, on parent/teacher conference nights parents were welcome to review their child's work on a more tangible basis. Students were always provided with easy access to their folders and given time to question grades or comments on papers. Most important, individual students were required at the beginning of the semester to fill out a "Goal Assessment" sheet, which they placed in their "Portfolio" file.

The Alternative Assessment Procedure

The "Goal Assessment" sheet (actually one per semester) consisted of three specific teacher-directed goals for each student and two student-created written goals that had received teacher approval. For example, one teacher-directed goal read: "I will write in complete sentences on all tests, quizzes, journals, homework, papers and all required written material in my Humanities class." Another stated: "By January, 1996, I will be able to intelligently articulate and clearly write about the themes covered in my Humanities class this semester. I will be able to explain how the works we read, the material we studied, and the projects completed reflected various aspects of these themes." An example of a student-created and approved goal at the beginning of the first semester read: "I will make a sincere effort to pay close attention to my spelling on tests and quizzes and will support that I have done so by demonstrating the number of spelling errors decreased or disappeared over time." Of course, as the year progressed, the goals might reflect a past history. For example, at the start of the second semester a goal read: "I will increase my grade in Humanities by five points from a 75 to an 80 by achieving at least an 80 on all of my tests, quizzes, homework, projects, etc."

During the quarter, but most particularly at the end of the quarter, students were required to reexamine personal goals and to select written material from working files that they felt validly demonstrated their achievement of these goals. They would then place these specific works with "captions" into their portfolio. The captions were written explanations and proof that the goal was in process or had been significantly achieved. The students' selections from one file to the other could change over time if subsequent works demonstrated improvement. Five captions per quarter (ten works with captions per semester) were the minimum number to be included in their portfolio. At the end of the year, each student could then take home what had become a comprehensive portfolio of selected performance. By getting in touch with these goal sheets and their own evaluative assessment of their progress, the students felt a sense of ownership. They were included in determining what they wanted to accomplish; they could monitor their performance and their stage of achievement.

In January, before the end of the semester, and again in June, before final grades, students were called up individually to two stations to meet with one of the members of the team while the class engaged in some cooperative learning project. These young scholars were to bring their portfolios with selected works and captions with them to the interview. They needed now to orally articulate to the teacher their accomplishments as demonstrated through the material they had selected to include in their portfolio and respond to questions about their performance. This conference process was clearly explained to all of the students at the start of the school year and reiterated throughout it. Additionally, class time was provided to move the papers, write the captions, and prepare for the interview. At this one time of the year, students were given the opportunity to bring their portfolios home to prepare accordingly.

The Results

The conference proved to be a valuable alternative form of evaluation. Meeting with each student individually provided both instructor and student with new

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insights about each other which would not necessarily be available in a traditional form of assessment. The vast majority of students were candid and sincere in their evaluation of their performance and insightful about what areas they needed to concentrate on in the future. There was a significant recognition on their part that all goals were an "in process" experience and that they often required additional effort. One question asked the students how far they have come in achieving their goal (for example, "I'm half way there" or "I have about 25 percent more to do to accomplish my goal").

The portfolio assessment was worth 20 percent of their semester grade. The grades given by the instructors were based on the subjective correlation between what was presented in writing and what was stated in the interview, and on the objective combination of the two assessments. This procedure allowed for a correction between what the students wrote and what they "meant" to write, a problem often evident in written assessments. Most significantly, no failures materialized through this process, and the vast majority of grades were in the range of a B. These grades were not "gifts" but accurate reflections of progress.

Students were encouraged to recognize that they have a significant role in their learning and in the evaluation of how much they have achieved. At the conclusion of the interviews, students were asked to indicate what grade they would give themselves in appraising their progress on the goals they included in their portfolio. These grades were either "on target" or below the teacher-generated grade. Only on two occasions did students give themselves a more generous grade than the teacher would have provided.

This successful alternative assessment procedure turns the assessment process around to where it truly belongs. It fits perfectly in this team-taught, interdisciplinary program, but it could certainly be applied, perhaps with minor revisions, to a traditional classroom setting. Students could not come forward with a meaningful portfolio if they had not made up any work missed or had failed to hand in homework, papers, or projects. For those teachers fearful of a "false" reading, this element, although counting for 20 percent of the semester grade, could not significantly account for an improper total assessment of a student's performance. This was supported by the fact that, despite no failures on the portfolio, two students did fail the semester by virtue of the other assessments included in their over-all grade. Most important, the success of this procedure was an enriching experience for the members of the team who sincerely accepted this approach as a more accurate or valid measurement of learning.

This was a rare and unique experience for the students because many assumed self-evaluative leadership roles for the first time in their educational experience. On the other hand, the teachers involved were challenged to guide, release, and stand back, awaiting what was to be a qualitatively rewarding, measurable success-a success initiated, driven, and accurately assessed by the learner. As in any new experience, there were occasional clumsy moments. However, the true essence of leadership was to surface in a satisfying way.

Students need to become more responsible for monitoring their performance; they need to see a correlation between what is expected of them and how they are evaluated. Any method that does so needs to be shared and implemented. If this has not always been a mandate of the educational process, it certainly must be one inculcated in the learning and assessment methods of the technologically evolving era of the twenty-first century, an era which requires that the teacher as pioneer become a facilitator and that the student assume a more active leadership role in the learning process.

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Snowboarding

by Rick Chambers, Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate School, Ontario

A couple of years ago, I attended a writing conference at the University of Indiana and stumbled into a session on Generation "X"-something about "meeting the needs of the Generation X student." The session was being conducted by Generation X-ers for Generation X-ers, and I was conspicuous by my baby-boomerishness, namely, I was over forty, grey, focusing through bifocals, sporting totally non-GAP apparel. The session was pretty much an hourlong "woe-is-us" lament, with lots of crestfallen looks, sighs, shaking of heads, and wringing of hands.

But, I don't know. I see lots of Generation X-ers every day and have two children who are in that particular group, and things may be different for them, but they're not disastrous. I've seen several episodes of *Friends* and therefore have some idea of the fictional situation. In fact, there are some Generation X-ers who make those of us in the previous generation feel not only like genuine geezers, but on top of that, like a bunch of guys who are so dumb that we couldn't catch the boat if we were standing on the deck.

I was flying home from a conference in San Diego last fall, and I had to change planes in Chicago en route to Toronto. The plane from San Diego was one that was divided into sets of three seats, the aisle, and then pairs of seats-trios and duets. The leg from San Diego to Chicago was three hours or more, and on the trip out, I had been fortunate enough to land a duet seat without a partner: I flew solo. It was great for a guy who's six feet tall-room to squirm, stretch, check the aisle, look out the window, turn sideways, stow the briefcase easily under the seat, use one fold-down tray for work and the other for eating, fold up the armrest and curl up if I felt like it. I didn't have to be bothered with someone crawling over me to go to the bathroom or make conversation with a stranger for three hours. I'm sort of like the Steve Martin character in *Rains, Planes, and Automobiles* when it comes to making conversation with strangers on trips: I will if I have to, but I'd prefer to be left alone. On the return flight, I was booked into one of the duet seats again, hoping that I'd be able to solo. As I was making my way down the aisle of the San Diego-Chicago jetliner to see if anyone was sitting in the seat next to mine, I strained to look over the hulking form of a man in front of me who was trying to stuff his Holstein-sized carry-on bag into the overhead

In fact, there are some Generation X-ers who maize those of us in the previous generation feel...like genuine geezers....

compartment. Over his shoulder, I could see a black baseball cap by the window in row 15. My heart sank: company. As I inched my way past the guy with the Holstein, my seatmate came into view. Oh brother-three hours of this. He was a kid: he looked at first to be about 15 or 16, but by the time I settled into my aisle seat and took a furtive look at my travel partner, the stubble on his chin suggested that he might be in his early 20s. He was wearing the 15-year-old "look," however: baggy, ripped jeans, Nike runners of some sort, an oversized purple T-shirt, and a black baseball cap, backwards of course, with reddish-blond hair showing through the plastic adjustable tab at the front. "You ever been charged for bringing oversized bags on an airplane?" I didn't realize at first that he was talking to me.

"What's that?"

"Have these guys ever charged you for bringing on oversized luggage?" "I've never had oversized luggage to bring on, and so, no, they haven't." And then to be polite, I added, Why?

"These bastards just charged me 50 dollars to put my snowboard in the luggage compartment. Fifty bucks! What a ripoff! Who the hell do they think they are? I've never been charged by any other airline anywhere. And now I'll have to pay another 50 to get my board home again. This is the absolute last time I'm flying with these bastards."

I made some sympathetic comment about it being a shame to be treated like that, and then opened the inflight magazine and feigned interest in an article on Asian investments.

My duet partner moved about in his seat a bit. He had a backpack (naturally) and took out a laptop computer. He flipped it open and started tapping and playing: it had to be a computer game of some sort, but I couldn't quite make out exactly what it was from behind my magazine.

He tired of that in a few minutes and put the computer away. He took out a glossy magazine of some kind and

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flipped through it quickly, probably still fuming over his 50-dollar oversized package fee. Too bad, kid.

After a while, the flight attendants served something like dinner, although a precise description of what it actually was is difficult. Whatever it was, however, Purple T-shirt couldn't eat it, and he wanted something vegetarian instead. I'm thinking, "Oh boy, I saw this coming." The flight attendant explained that he should have ordered a special meal in advance, and they didn't have a vegetarian meal for him. He could eat everything except the meat, she advised. Since that was what most of us were doing anyway, Purple T slumped back in his seat and pushed the plastic food tray up against the seat in front of him.

When the food was removed, it was nap time. My bench buddy was asleep in no time, and after a few pages of the novel I had brought with me, I was asleep as well. When I awoke, we were about 45 minutes out of Chicago. My neighbor was awake and flipping through his magazine again.

I didn't feel like reading, so I glanced over at what he was looking at. He noticed my attention, pointed at a picture, and said, "I've been snowboarding there. That's Whistler, in British Columbia. That's Canada, you know."

"Really."

"Ya," and then he began flipping through the magazine, "and I've snowboarded here-that's Sweden-and" (flip, flip, flip) "that's Vermont-Killington-and" (flip, flip) "this is Aspen. I've been there too."

I said, "Do you do this for business or fun?"

"Both."

Purple T was talking. We had 40 minutes to go. My novel was dull. I encouraged him.

"Is snowboarding like windsurfing on snow? I've tried windsurfing, and the positioning of the feet must be sort of the same."

I didn't tell this kid that the one and only time that I'd tried windsurfing-15 years ago-I'd fallen in the lake and couldn't get back up on the board again. However, for a nonjock faking an interest in some kid's "extreme" sport, I thought I was doing a pretty good job of leading the witness.

"Ya," he said, sort of indulging me, "it's kinda like windsurfing. Here, I'll show ya." And he opened the magazine to a page where they were showing how to strap boots to the boards. He demonstrated how the boots were attached, and then showed me a diagram of his favorite stance (so that he could go backwards or forwards if he had to-so he said). And then he started showing me other things in the magazine -equipment, clothes, the best snowboarding locations.

"How is it," I asked tentatively, "that you've snowboarded at all of these places-Sweden and all?"

"My buddies and I have a company, and we make snowboards."

Excuse me? Backwards-black-baseball-cap-and-purple T-shirt has a company? With buddies?

"No kidding?" I said ingenuously.

"Ya. Here. I'll show ya." And he flipped through the magazine to a full-page ad.

"This is our company. That's our logo. Pretty cool, huh?"

"Very"

"We make snowboards, and we're developing a line of jeans and shoes to go with our boards. You know, our product line."

"Like Reebok and Nike," I said, demonstrating my tenuous ability to stay with sports business talk.

"That's what I was doing on the computer. I'll show ya."

And Purple T-shirt Entrepreneur bent over and pulled out his expensive little laptop computer. He flipped it open, hit the start button, and then pulled up a screen showing the blueprint of what looked like a hiking boot.

"What's that?" I asked.

"It's my shoe design. See?" And he hit a button, and the screen jumped to a different angle of the model of a shoe.

"Your shoe?"

"Ya. I'm designing it."

"Really. What kind of shoe?"

"Actually, it's not a shoe; it's a boot. I'm designing it to go with our snowboard brand line."

"Where do you have this stuff made? Here in the U.S.?"

"We get the snowboards made here. We've got the wood and the technology, and everything's laminated, and it works out pretty good. They're made in California. But the jeans are made in Hong Kong-you can't beat the prices in Hong Kong. And we'll probably have the shoes made in Korea because they're all set up for this kind of thing and it's a lot cheaper than having them made here."

I couldn't stand it any longer. I had to ask. "How old are you?"

"I'm 23."

"How old are your partners?"

"They're 23 and 24."

"And you're making money?" I asked, hoping that if this guy was riding in economy coach, he was probably as broke as I was.

"Anything we make right now, we put back into the company" which explained why he was riding in coach. "Snowboarding is the fastest growing winter sport in North America. There are all kinds of new snowboarding companies out there, but if you've

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got some money to invest, buy stock in New Hampshire Snowboards: they're going public in about a month, and they're one of the best. You can't lose.
That's a free tip."

"Thanks," I said. And then, "So, how long will it take for you and your buddies to make money in this business?"

"We'll probably only do this for five years or so. By that time, the big ski manufacturers will be into the business, and they'll come around and buy up small companies like us. Our company is worth about five million dollars now, but by the time we sell out, we should be into the multimillions."

My mouth dropped.

And then, innocently, he asked, "What do you do?"

Pause.

Count 10 steamboats. "I'm waiting to be bought out, too," I replied.

He laughed. He was polite. He could afford to be. He was talking to a 47-year-old baby boomer geezer, locked into his job for security and the pension, and meanwhile, Purple T-shirt knew he had the world by the short hairs. This conversation was suddenly depressing me, so I changed the topic. "So, why are you going to Chicago?"

"It's Thanksgiving. I'm going to see my gran'ma. And then, I'm doing a publicity shoot in Wisconsin. I hope they have snow"

There was another pause. I thought, he's going to see his "gran'ma." Here was this refugee from Generation X, the lost generation of the 90s, sitting on a five million dollar business, soon to be multimillion, wearing grade 9 rapper-wannabe jeans and hat and T-shirt, riding in economy class, and complaining about a 50-dollar fee for taking his snowboard. I thought about those university students back in Indiana at the writing conference lamenting that this generation of young people would become the flotsam of the late twentieth century.

When we landed in Chicago, the plane taxied to a stop, and everyone jumped to their feet pretending to be ready to leave, even though everyone knew that no one could go anywhere until the front door was unlatched and the folks in first class found their way to the exit. As we waited, I wished Purple T-shirt all the best with his company, and a happy Thanksgiving with this gran'ma, and a good return flight.

He said, "Thanks, but I'm never flying with these assholes again."

As I squeezed down the aisle past the man with the Holstein, I hoped I hadn't been included in the epithet.

NCTE Sponsors Summer Seminar on Reflection

A three-day conference, "Expanding the Conversation on Reflection: Innovative Practices, New Understandings, Current Challenges" is scheduled for June 26-28 in Montreal. Sponsored by NCTE Professional Development Services in conjunction with the Association of Teachers of English in Quebec and the Centre for Literacy, Montreal, Quebec, the seminar will bring together educators from all levels (K-College)to consider a wide range of both practical and theoretical issues related to reflection and its role in teaching and learning.

Keynote speakers Patricia Carini (founder of the Prospect School and Prospect Archives, and an independent educator with several large school districts) and Louise Wetherbee Phelps (professor of writing and English and director of graduate studies in composition and cultural rhetoric at Syracuse University) will help focus attention on three major questions: (1) What do we mean when we talk about a reflective classroom, a reflective student, and a reflective teacher? (2) What practices foster reflection? How do we know that these practices are productive, and what do we mean by productive? (3) What challenges do we face when we introduce reflection, and how might we overcome them? Are there other challenges that characterize long-term efforts at reflective learning and teaching, and how might we accommodate those?

Registration Information

Registration fee includes conference materials, luncheon on Friday, and morning refreshments. NCTE members may register early for $135; nonmembers for $160. **Early registration deadline is May 27, 1997.** After that date, registration will be $10 more.

The conference will be held at the Radisson Hotel des Gouverneurs, in downtown Montreal. Participants are responsible for securing and paying for their own lodging. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Radisson Hotel des Gouverneurs and will be held at the special rate until May 26, 1997.

For further information about the conference or to register, call NCTE's Professional Development Services at 217-328-3870, ext. 203, or send an e-mail query to pds@ncte.org.

Join the CEL Listserv

The Conference on English Leadership has established a listserv for its members, as a means of exchanging information and networking with colleagues. As a member of the listserv, you can write and send e-mail to one address (ncte-cel@ttc.org) and all other CEL members who have joined the listserv will receive a copy of your message.

To subscribe to the listserv, send an e-mail message to this address: listproc@ttc.org. Leave the subject line blank, and in the body of the message, simply type the following:

subscribe ncte-cel <your first name> <your last name>

(Example: subscribe ncte-cel Jeff Golub.) You should receive a confirmation within 24 hours that you have been added to the group.

To post a note to your colleagues on the listserv, address the note to ncte-cel@ttc.org, then write and send your message as you would with regular e-mail.

If you later decide that you want to be dropped from the listserv, simply send an e-mail again to listproc@ttc.org, leave the subject line blank, and in the body of the message, type:

unsubscribe ncte-cel

If you have questions about the listserv, or encounter problems while subscribing to the list, please e-mail Jeff Golub at golub@ttc.org.

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Study Groups Help Teachers, Administrators Design Customized Professional Development

NCTE Study Groups, a new category of NCTE affiliation, hold great potential for a new kind of vital communication among teachers and will enable educators to design their own professional development based on their own questions and needs concerning a selected Study Group topic.

These Study Groups can come in any size and cover any geographic distribution, in any form, without much governance. Each group will have a leader who must be an NCTE member. The Study Group, however, can be made up of both NCTE members and nonmembers, including individuals from all sectors of the community-teachers, administrators, school board members, parents, business representatives, etc.-either from one school or various schools within a district, and a group may form across levels, K-college.

A $15 application fee covers the cost of the Study Group Resource Packet that is sent to the group leader. The packet includes a selection of journal articles and essays specifically chosen for productive discussion of the topic, a selected bibliography on the topic, and a list of related NCTE resources. The materials are intended to stimulate, but not direct, the discussion of the Study Group themes. Participants are encouraged to use the Study Group resources and discussions to make sense of their own experiences and the experiences of others.

The eight topics offered for discussion are:

- Spelling in the Elementary School
- Portfolios in the Elementary School
- Portfolios in the Middle School
- Portfolios in the Senior High School
- Young Adult Literature
- Censorship: Issues and Answers K-12
- Working Conditions at the College Level
- Writing Assessment at the College Level

For more information, or to receive a copy of the "Study Group Guidelines," call Marcia Loeschen at NCTE Headquarters, 800-369-6283, ext. 232.

NCTE Passes Resolutions on Teacher Professionalism, Right to Teach

At the Annual Convention in Chicago this past November, NCTE passed resolutions on a number of issues, including one which supports a teacher's right to teach using methods that are accepted by the profession, even though those methods may not have local acceptance. NCTE also resolved to oppose the hiring of teachers who have not completed teacher preparation programs, to research the role of professionalism in the recruitment and retention of teachers, and to promote professional and public awareness of the power of nonprint texts, such as film and oral storytelling. The resolutions were voted upon by NCTE members during the Council's annual business meeting during the Convention.

On Hiring and Assigning Teachers

BACKGROUND: In 1985, the National Council of Teachers of English passed a resolution urging local, state, and national school boards and agencies to require that all English language arts teachers be appropriately prepared in accordance with NCTE's *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts* (revised and republished in 1996). Despite its firm stand on teacher preparation, NCTE and its affiliates remain concerned that in some parts of the country the practice continues of hiring and assigning unqualified teachers to fill vacancies in English language arts.

Contributing to the re-emergence of this concern is a teacher shortage coupled with a recognized need to reduce class size. Teachers guiding students in the development of literacy must

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have a knowledge of content, pedagogy, and appropriate methodology. Be it therefore

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Teachers of English continue to oppose the hiring or assigning of teachers to teach English language arts who have not completed the recognized guidelines for teacher preparation in English language arts as specified by the credentialing requirements of their states, in spite of the need to address the realities of teacher shortages in some states and districts; that NCTE and its affiliates continue to educate legislators, school officials, and the public about the complexities of teaching English language arts; and that NCTE publicize and promote its resources (conferences, publications, and networks) as professional development services to help all teachers.

On the Importance of Professional Community

BACKGROUND: The teaching profession requires active and reflective participation in the dialogue of the professional community. Through such interactions as occur in collegial study groups, scholarly publications, and professional organizations, teachers remain current and effective in content, pedagogy, and methodology. We believe that teachers who engage in activities within their local and the broader professional communities maintain a vitality that not only keeps them in this field but also promotes the career of teaching to others. Many school officials, however, do not adequately support teachers in their efforts to participate fully in professional communities. We need to demonstrate through research the connections between such professional engagement and the recruitment, continued education, and retention of good teachers to represent the diversity that the field of education requires. Be it therefore **RESOLVED,** that the National Council of Teachers of English solicit research proposals, seek funding sources, and offer forums to document the role of the professional community in the continued education, recruitment, and retention of effective teachers of English language arts.

On Teachers' Right to Teach

BACKGROUND: This resolution deals with teachers' right to intellectual freedom. Resolutions dating from the 1970s, position statements, and books already exist which define and defend teachers' rights to discuss and decide what to teach:

Dealing with Censorship (1979) and *Preserving Intellectual Freedom* (1994), two books on various censorship issues;

"Statement on Censorship and Professional Guidelines" (1982), a document by the NCTE Board of Directors outlining the distinctions between censorship and professional guidelines for selection of teaching materials;

"The Students' Right to Read" (1984), NCTE's position statement on intellectual freedom and recommendations for systematic review of complaints about teaching materials;

"Common Ground" (1992), a statement by the NCTE/IRA Joint Task Force on Intellectual Freedom defending the freedom to teach and learn;

"Guidelines for Dealing with Censorship of Nonprint Materials" (1993), a document developed by an NCTE task force underscoring teachers' obligation to develop students' ability to think critically about nonprint media and build on students' often sophisticated media literacy skills; and

"Guidelines for Selection of Materials in English Language Arts Programs," a document that affirms the importance of thoughtful selection of materials by qualified English professionals.

The documents named above clearly affirm the rights of students to read and have access to a variety of books and other media. These documents also defend the rights of teachers as professionals to participate in decisions about what books and other media materials to teach. We have a strong position on the right to read. We now need a strong statement on the right to teach using methods which are accepted by the profession but which may not have local acceptance. No clear statement exists addressing the rights of teachers to use possibly controversial methods or to provide experiences that broaden students' ways of thinking. Be it therefore

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Teachers of English issue a strong statement on teachers' right to teach using methods accepted by the profession; that NCTE affirm the right to teach so as to provide educational experiences that promote open inquiry, critical thinking, diversity in thought and expression, and respect for others; and that NCTE continue to support the joint committee of SLATE (Support for the Learning and Teaching of English) and the Standing Committee against Censorship in publishing professional guidelines for teachers' right to teach.

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Call for Manuscripts Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500-5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

October 1997 (June 15 deadline)
Scripting Virtual Classrooms: The Promise and Paradox of 'Technology

December 1997 (August 15 deadline)
Alternative Ways of Evaluating

February 1998 (October 15, 1997, deadline) **Guest Editor-Would** you like to try your hand at editing the *Quarterly?* For details, contact Henry Kiernan by May 1, 1997.

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Henry Kiernan, Editor, *English Leadership Quarterly*, West Morris Regional High School District, Administration Building, Four Bridges Road, Chester, NJ 07930; phone 908-879-6404, ext. 278; fax 908-879-8861; e-mail hkwmreg@planet.net.

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Leadership for Excellence

Conference on English Leadership

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While the development of national and state standards continues to dominate this decade's educational reform agenda, the real story may focus on a renewal of the school's role in building a sense of community. We hear of the need for citizens to inform ourselves and to think critically about issues that affect our communities. We hear of schools conceived of as "communities of learners" instilling a sense of civic responsibility and nurturing ties among students, staff, parents, and community groups.

It seems as if every school has a community service program or one in development. Schools proudly list their service learning partnerships with community groups and foundations. In addition, parents, teachers, and students are taking a more active role in school committees and are participating in site-based management decisions and in long-range planning initiatives.

Yet how did all this start? Was it George Bush's image of a "thousand points of light"? Was it Bill Clinton's initiation of national service programs? Or was it Hillary Clinton, who, in choosing a title for a book, adopted the African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child"?

While national leaders may wish to claim responsibility, the real credit once again belongs to English teachers. Long before the beginnings of the resurgence of community began, English teachers across the land had always taught literature that addressed the individual's responsibility to society and the relationship of individuals and families with the community. We also spent much of the 1980s building communities of writers through a variety of writing process training sessions, training that reinforced the need to write for a public audience.

Classrooms became places where students wrote for academic and public communities. English teachers led the movement for writing across the curriculum, engaging colleagues and students to write for diverse audiences both within and outside the classroom. Writing centers flourished, technology provided new methods to publish student work, students read their work aloud in peer reviews, and teachers and students constructed their own web pages. And most importantly, in the search for a varied public audience, teachers began to initiate prompts for students to write letters, including letters to the editor and letters to federal, state, and local public officials. Research papers became question driven, and in the spirit of doing "real research" students became ethnographers asking original questions, conducting interviews, and writing fact sheets about their schools and communities.

I suspect you may think this is a bit of a stretch to credit English teachers for "building community" within our society. However, reserve your judgment until after you read the articles in this issue. Marjorie Ford and Ann Watters teach at

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Stanford, and when I read their reader *Writing for Change: A Community Reader* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), this issue's theme was born. The community service learning and writing projects they initiated have encouraged students to increase their awareness of context, audience, and research to a greater degree than many traditional academic assignments require. Patricia Wachholz considers the challenges of peer response groups in a linguistically diverse classroom. Regina Chatel presents the process of school-community-developed K–12 integrated language arts standards. Ruth Townsend offers six principles for cultivating a climate of literacy within a school community.

We all live in communities. As teachers and leaders, we find it exciting to enable students to move from private reflection to public statement. We find it rewarding when service learning experiences inspire students to take an active role in responsibly changing their schools and communities. ●

Integrating Service Learning into the Composition Curriculum

by Ann Watters and Marjorie Ford, Stanford University

Associate Director's View: Ann Watters

Some years ago, as an instructor at a small Catholic college, teaching what was then being called a basic writing course, I worked with a reentry student, a woman of African descent whom I will call Rose. She told me privately that she had agoraphobia; she was certain, as well, that she had writer's block, because she found it impossible to produce academic papers for her courses.

We worked extensively in conference. Rose cranked out a phrase or a line at a time in response to heuristic questioning, but she found it impossible to put together a unit of writing larger than a sentence. It was clear to me that she was anxious and that her anxiety interfered with her ability to produce a sustained piece of writing. It was also clear that the ambiguity of the writing situation, the lack of clarity about what was expected in "academic writing," was a substantial part of the problem.

Rose wanted very much to be able to write well. Asked for an example of what she would like to be able to write, she mentioned that a friend of hers was the wife of a prominent 1960s era political figure who had been imprisoned for some years at San Quentin. Rose wanted to write a letter to the parole board in support of his request to be released. With this purpose firmly in mind, she found it remarkably easy to develop a thesis and supporting evidence and to craft a coherent, argumentative letter to the board.

The following academic year at the same college, in a small class for "developmental writers" and with Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations* in mind along with students' complaints about boring assignments, I proposed to my disinterested and not particularly motivated group of eight that they produce an underground guide to the college. I suggested that they could tell their peers what they wish they had known about the school. Relishing the task, the group developed topic areas, conducted research, wrote up and exchanged drafts, and then produced, using then-new desktop publishing technology, a book they later sold at the campus bookstore.

My experiences at this college shaped my way of thinking about writing assignments both at that institution and at my new post in Stanford's expository writing program. Although I was teaching student writers with generally much stronger academic skills, the traditional essay assignments of the day did not stimulate the enthusiasm and

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engagement of the "real" writing assignments at my former college. Yet students need to learn academic discourse, so an ideal curriculum would, we believed, combine the engagement of service learning with the broad curricular goals of our writing program; it would integrate community service writing as one element of a rich composition curriculum. At this same time, a colleague at our campus public service center called to see if we might consider joining forces and having students write about their community service experiences. What emerged from those meetings was Stanford's Community Service Writing Project.

Community Service Writing at Stanford, then, developed out of the confluence of three elements: classroom experience and need, the composition field's new and renewed social emphasis and attention to rhetorical situation (see, for example, Karen Burke LeFevre's *Invention as a Social Act*), and the outreach of the campus public service center, which was then striving to link community service with the college curriculum as part of its own agenda for service learning. (It is important to note that a large part of their motivation was driven by the need to provide opportunities for public service within the curriculum for students who want to participate in community service but have very little time available to do so.)

With composition literature focusing on the social nature of the writing process, and with classroom experiences validating the use of real writing situations in motivating students and teaching them about writing for audiences other than the teacher, the options presented by people from the public service center, who themselves were educators, gave us the opportunities to put theory into practice.

The public service center developed a number of opportunities in local agencies on and off campus. Agencies were linked to courses by theme and by type of writing assignments that the agencies offered and that the instructors wished to assign. Students were able to follow up on their own interests in many cases; for example, students interested in health care fields could find hospital placements for their writing assignments, with assignments ranging from research to newsletter articles and op-ed pieces about health policy. One student writer interested in hospital work selected this organization and interviewed three people who had benefited from services at this hospital's emergency room, as well as the doctor and nurse on duty. He then wrote a front-page article that informed newsletter readers about the emergency room's services.

The hospital benefited from the student's energy and enthusiasm as well as from the article for its newsletter; the student was able to chase down leads, schedule interviews, collect and synthesize information from several sources, and write and revise an article with an audience of several thousand people. He received feedback from both the agency leader and the instructor and revised with the appropriate audience and purpose firmly in mind. Instead of an assignment that begins "Imagine you are writing an article for several thousand people on the subject of health care, . . ." the student is actually in the writing situation and needs to perform to his best ability: many people will read his work and care about what he says.

Other students linked up with the local Urban Ministry, an agency that helps homeless people connect with local services, from food resources to banking. One student who volunteered to work with this agency was asked to develop a one-page information sheet on free checking accounts in the city, because homeless people, lacking a safe place to keep their money, often are robbed of their social security or other checks. The student researched banks throughout the city, synthesized the information, and developed the flier for the ministry to distribute. The student learned not only information-gathering and synthesizing skills; he also learned how to write clearly and concisely, with appropriate emphasis but without a patronizing tone; he learned to consider and respond to a unique rhetorical situation. Through a very untraditional assignment, the student learned many of the traditionally valued skills and techniques instructors strive to cultivate in their writing students.

Even genres of writing that students may never have the opportunity to use in their careers or in college can teach them skills valuable in both worlds. For example, one group of students chose to write for an agency serving women and children who were fleeing abusive relationships. The students developed a series of public service announcements, from 10-second to 60-second radio spots. In the process, they learned how to pare down information to the minimum, to judge and select which additional pieces of information to add to the longer spots, and to make every single word count.

Once we accepted the premise that community service writing can be a valuable means of teaching our students, we had to decide when, where, and how to integrate such assignments. In this regard, the campus public service center was essential. The center developed placement sheets on local agencies with brief descriptions of the agency, location and contact person, and writing opportunities. The center provided four to six agencies for each of the two to four classes that started integrating Community Service Writing (CSW) the first year. Some instructors made the service learning assignment optional, while others required it for the whole class. Instructors could select agencies that provided opportunities appropriate for their course goals. For example, if students do report-style newsletter articles for their CSW projects, then other course assignments might focus more heavily on argumentation. If

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instructors wanted research opportunities for their students, they could select placements that provide such opportunities.

In the first year or two, the program and instructors dealt with the inevitable logistical concerns: transportation to and from agencies, time frames at agencies that were inhospitable to our quarter system's rapid turnaround time, final assignments that had to be turned in to both instructor and agency director, and the like.

In the passage that follows, one instructor in the program describes her approach to and experience with integrating community service writing into her writing courses.

The Instructor's View: Marjorie Ford

Through working with community service writing projects, instructors learn to be flexible about integrating a variety of relevant thematic issues with the wide range of assignments that might be completed for the course's community service writing requirement. Instructors in our program have very successfully shaped courses around a number of intriguing themes that raise social issues: for example, "Writing Nature," "Reading and Writing Gender," "Disabling Discourse: The Narratives of Slavery," "Writing Aids/Writing on Aids." My course is organized around a broader theme, "Writing for Change," which is then defined by more specific issues related to community, such as family and community, the individual and community, health and community, education and community.

The course theme, which Ann Watters and I have expanded into the reader-rhetoric, *Writing for Change*, encourages writing students to develop their thinking and writing through reading thematic selections, class discussions, and writing about their readings and community experiences. Students also share what they have written with their instructor and their peers and with the campus or community agency where they completed their community service writing project. Writing for an audience, whether it be a class of peers or a community agency, is fundamental in this approach to teaching writing.

My experiences teaching with community service writing as part of the curriculum that is supported in classes by regular peer sharing of student writing and discussion of thematically relevant readings continue to confirm that students do begin to understand the importance of expressing their ideas in ways that reflect their awareness of their audience's values, interests, and backgrounds. Once students begin to have a sense of connection with those for whom they are writing, they can also begin to realize that their writing can make a difference. My students have learned that writing which asks others to listen and offers meaningful information, an intelligent analysis, a telling anecdote, or a practical solution can effect real change. Again and again, I have seen this happening in my classrooms and in the communities where we have helped through our service projects. Students who know that their writing can effect change feel stronger motivation to write more clearly, to communicate more effectively.

My approach to integrating community service writing into the course's curriculum has evolved over the eight years that I have explored the implications of including service learning in a writing class. What I share with you now reflects my current thinking; my experience tells me that this approach will continue to change as I keep searching for more effective ways to integrate service learning into a writing curriculum.

In my course, Writing for Change, all students are required to keep a journal of their service project's weekly progress and to submit the journal at the end of the quarter. I have developed two different methods that students can follow as they complete their community service writing requirement. The first way is writing for a community agency, which often involves producing a newsletter article, a brochure, or a fact sheet. For example, my students have written and produced newsletters for the Upward Bound program; for the Cancer Resources Patient Center at the Stanford Hospital; for Las Raza Central Legale, an immigration agency in San Francisco; for Bridge, an organization that supports health awareness on campus; and for Volunteers in Asia, a campus organization that trains and sponsors student teachers for summer programs in Vietnam, China, and Thailand. Students have also written fact sheets for service organizations such as the Baylands Conservation Center, the San Francisco Zoo, the Mid Peninsula Peace Center, the Palo Alto Medical Clinic, and the Stanford Literacy Project. More recently, students have started to design web pages for agencies.

The second way that students can complete the community service writing portion of the course involves developing a reflective paper about a service experience at a community agency. For example, students have tutored children at community agencies such as Families in Transition in East Palo Alto or at public elementary schools such as Ravenswood Elementary School in East Palo Alto. Students have volunteered to help Alzheimer's patients at the local veterans' hospital, to teach disabled children to swim through programs sponsored by the Stanford Children's Hospital, to act as big sisters or big brothers to children in local high schools. These students then write papers that recount their experiences and that also offer an analytical and reflective perspective on their service experiences. In some cases, students will develop a research paper related to their service experience. For example, a student who volunteered at Families in Transition and helped tutor elementary school children in East Palo Alto wrote a research paper entitled "Illiteracy: Volunteers Can Make a Difference." Her experiences tutoring these children provided her

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with real evidence; more importantly, they helped her to develop a genuine social concern for the devastating effects of illiteracy.

In the first weeks of class, while the students are still thinking about what they would like to do for their community service writing project and before we read and discuss specific community issues related to an issue such as health or nature, we read and write about the concept and definitions of service learning as presented by Robert Coles, Benjamin Barber, Jeremy Cohen, and Patricia O'Connor. Coles and Barber provide a theoretical framework for service learning; Cohen and O'Connor describe particular service learning projects that their students

A special energy develops in all of the writing courses I have taught which integrate the theme of community and writing for change with community service writing projects.

have completed successfully. In this context, we also talk about a variety of completed student community service projects that are included in *Writing for Change*. Finally, as a part of this introductory section, we have a discussion in which we compare and contrast the expectations and goals of academic learning and service learning.

In a 10-week course we typically focus on four issues related to community: most recently my classes have explored health, education, family, and nature. The readings for each issue raise concerns that are relevant to the students and their communities. For example, in the health chapter, students read essays about the importance of stress management in college, about the consequences of eating disorders, about the effectiveness of sex education in high schools, about the emotional challenges of losing a family member or close friend to cancer. While analyzing the articles, students sometimes feel comfortable discussing their own related experiences and concerns. In addition, I have had many students take the initiative to arrange for a service placement on their own because through our readings and class discussions they have realized that they want to learn more about a particular issue raised in class and they hope to discover some useful insights at a service organization which covers their issues. For example, students who were interested in eating disorders have found placements at Bridge, a student counseling center, where they have fact sheets and lead discussion groups on issues related to eating disorders.

Several students interested in women's health issues worked with premedical students to establish a clinic for single mothers at the Stanford Hospital. These students welcomed the opportunity to complete a service project which required that they face social or economic issues that they had only read about previously. As one of the students concluded:

> This project introduced me to people, to ideas, and to situations that I would not have experienced in the classroom. It illustrated that I am able to reach out to people through my writing. My project gave me a sense of purpose because I could share my own views with others based on my experiences as opposed to finding understanding only through studying—it was very important to me that I got a chance to apply my point of view.

A number of students have volunteered to help at the Cancer Patient Resource Center because they have had family members who suffered from cancer. In most cases, the students are eager to have the opportunity to work with an organization that helps people who have faced problems similar to those that they too have experienced with friends or family members. Students mature as they help others; their service projects help them to feel better about themselves and their writing because they feel they are doing something in the "real world"; they are effecting change, even if it is in a small way. Melinda, who volunteered at the Cancer Patient Resource Center, expressed her new sense of engagement with learning:

> Writing truly was its own reward. The best part about community service writing is that feeling of accomplishment: I did not just write my paper for myself and to earn a good grade. I wrote my piece for an editorial board and 2,000 listeners. We let cancer patients and their families know that there are four students at Stanford who care very much about them. We all reached out, and hopefully, we helped someone.

Along with their service learning projects, students write a range of types of traditional essays such as argument, definition, and causal analysis to present their interpretations of readings covered in class. Through these writing assignments, students learn to organize their thoughts, to draft to include evidence and examples, to read their work to others, and to rewrite. Students also conduct interviews and do research to develop the papers they are writing. All of these traditional assignments and activities are supported and enhanced by the community service writing project.

A special energy develops in all of the writing courses I have taught which integrate the theme of community and writing for change with community service writing projects. In these classes, students begin to think of their conversations in and out of class as real opportunities to explore their thoughts and feelings; they talk more seriously with one another during class discussions; they begin to care more deeply about what they are writing and work harder to produce clear, meaningful, and intelligent papers and projects. When these classes are over, I always hope that my students will continue to care about helping in their commu-

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nities and that, through their writing and through volunteering, they will continue to try to affect the social, economic, and political decisions that are being made at their college and in their communities. I believe their experiences helping others through the community service writing project have a lasting impact that can empower them to become more responsible citizens.

Many of us who teach writing first fell in love with reading great literature, which teaches us to be compassionate and asks us to yield to our better selves, to our more ethical selves. At its very best, community service learning and writing as we have worked to define it in our program combines practical writing activities with academic and experiential learning. We believe, in our better moments, that the combination imparts a bit of the wisdom of the great literature that has inspired many of us since we were college students ourselves. ●

Linguistic Diversity in the Peer Response Group

by Patricia B. Wachholz, Lane College, Jackson, Tennessee

Monday, 9:00 a.m.: Listening to Kaneko's Essay

I pull up a chair and situate it just outside the circle my students have made with their desks. They have revised their essays, having workshopped them in small groups earlier in the week. Now they would present their revisions to the whole class for response. I plan to sit somewhat outside the group and observe, possibly commenting from time to time. I have a note pad in front of me so that I can take notes as students read their revisions.

Kaneko is first. He has worked diligently on this assignment. His topic is complicated: "Views of Mankind: A Comparison of the Philosophies of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard." Kaneko clears his voice and begins.

Unfortunately, from nearly the moment Kaneko begins to read, I realize that I—and the class as well—have absolutely no idea what anything he is saying means. Not only is the topic complex, but his pronunciations of many of the words are unrecognizable. Nonetheless, he reads on, and when he is finished, I smile weakly as we make eye contact. Kaneko sits upright and proud, hands folded, a satisfied smile on his face. Not knowing what to say, I look around at the rest of the class. All eyes are aimed in my direction. The students are silent, waiting expectantly for me to say something.

"Okaaay, Kaneko," I acknowledge hesitantly. "That's awfully deep. Does anyone have anything to say about Kaneko's paper?" I am met with silence. A student coughs nervously. Another student looks out the window. I continue. "It's very difficult when we try to follow along with something this complicated and just listen. It's difficult to comment appropriately about the things we find good and the things we find confusing because the subject matter alone is confusing to most of us." I look at the class and direct my comments to them. "Is it confusing to you? Or am I the only one who doesn't know the difference between Kierkegaard's philosophy and Nietzsche's? I feel like I'm lucky to pronounce their names—not being a philosophy person." I begin to wonder how I can move this discussion (or non-discussion) along.

"I did hear a couple of pronoun-antecedent problems." Here, I segue into a short grammar lesson on pronoun-antecedent agreement, writing examples on the board, mostly for lack of anything else to say. I feel uneasy about focusing on grammar, especially since I emphasize to students that these things can be fixed in editing.

The students look like they are losing interest. I go back to my seat at the edge of the circle. A few moments pass as I wait for someone—anyone—to comment.

"I like your title," I mention. Another moment passes. Frustrated and tense, I can't think of anything else to say. The smile has disappeared from Kaneko's face, and the rest of the students look at their own papers, avoiding Kaneko's eyes and mine.

Process Research and ESL Students

Given the increasing numbers of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to ignore the rapidly changing populations in today's schools. Nowhere is the multicultural makeup and linguistic diversity of American society demonstrated more clearly than in the classrooms of this nation. According to the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, the number of people from non-English-speaking households is expected to increase from 33 million in 1987 to nearly 40 million by the year 2000 (Dillard, 1993). Discouragingly, it is estimated that two-thirds of limited-English-speaking students do not receive the language assistance they need to succeed academically (Dyson and Freedman, 1991). Furthermore, in many schools, as a matter of policy, students must demonstrate proficiency in writing conventionally correct essays in order to exit from an ESL track to mainstream classes. Yet there is little understanding among educators about how writing ability in a second language develops or what

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instructional strategies should be used to bring this development about (Dyson and Freedman, 1991).

While research on writing in a second language is sketchy, the available research seems to suggest the utilization, with ESL students, of writing process methods designed for writing to occur in contexts where language itself is used for thought and problem solving (Diaz, 1989). Among these methods are collaborative learning about writing and peer response groups. Observing superior writing gains among ESL students in a process classroom compared with those in a traditional classroom, Ammon (1985) asserts that inexperienced ESL writers must develop new procedures for drawing on their linguistic and communicative competence and their world knowledge to communicate effectively in writing, an assertion supported by the use of peer response groups in writing instruction. Moreover, Zamel (1983) concludes that teachers should not be the students' only readers. In a classroom-based ethnographic study investigating the use of process writing techniques with college ESL writers and examining both context and student interaction within one peer writing group, Diaz (1986) ascertained that ESL students benefited from the availability of expanded audiences for their writing. In classrooms, peer groups can increase students' social interactions and potential for helping one another acquire written language. Classroom time should include workshop-type collaborative activities. According to Zamel, the overarching goal is to establish a community of writers consisting of members who, through collaborative activities, learn to comment about ideas in writing, understand the needs of the reader-audience, and thus are able to apply these skills to their own writing.

Modifying the Process to Meet Writers' Needs

If nothing else, the events on the day Kaneko read his first essay highlighted Freedman's (1987) claim that as much can go wrong as goes right in peer response sessions. It was apparent to me that having L_2 writers (ESL writers for whom English is a second language) read their papers for peer response would not work in this class. Although I want writers to "hear" their own writing critically and thus ask students to read their papers aloud to the response group, since listening to Kaneko, I am uncomfortable with oral presentation alone. I now insist that students bring copies of their papers for group members. They continue to read aloud, but they reinforce their reading with a hard copy of the text. Examination of videotaped and audiotaped transcripts of peer group activities has affirmed my judgment that students are better able to respond to peers' work, particularly L_2 peers, when they have copies of group members' texts to follow as papers are read aloud.

While there seem to be many positive reasons to use peer response groups in the writing classroom, much can and often does go wrong with such groups, subverting teachers' well-intended pedagogical goals at every juncture.

Similarly, L_2 students benefited from the introduction of manuscript copies to the response process. Early in the semester, it was apparent that some L_2 students were having problems understanding what was going on, as this observational note indicates: "In group 2 the Japanese girl is acting as a translator for the Japanese boy. She tells him in Japanese what the L_1 student (a native English writer) has said. The boy has a translation dictionary open, but he cannot seem to keep up with the group."

It is important to L_2 students' growth as writers that the meaning of their compositions not be unnecessarily obfuscated. It is further important to their new language acquisition to have opportunities for practicing oral use of the language on a native-speaking audience. Ayaka recognized this second need with the following journal comment: "I'm Japanese so my English pronounce [pronunciation] is very bad. American students correct my [pronunciation]."

The pronunciation dilemma was alleviated by having students provide to group members copies of the texts they read in responding-to-writing sessions. For L_2 students, this afforded a vehicle for clear presentation of their ideas and a means for oral language practice as well. Using manuscript copies did not cause the translation dictionaries to go away, but there was less translation to Japanese when each student had a copy of the text.

Peer Response Groups and Linguistic Diversity

While there seem to be many positive reasons to use peer response groups in the writing classroom, much can and often does go wrong with such groups, subverting teachers' well-intended pedagogical goals at every juncture. On the positive side, peer response groups in my class helped students respond to their own writing as they sensed the needs of their audience. Students talked to explore and enlarge their understanding of their own writing, developing meaning as they talked in their response groups, often recognizing trouble areas in their writing without peer help. This anticipation of audience needs for clarification was apparent for L_2 as well as L_1 writers. In the context of the peer response group, student writing is redefined in terms of audience. Theoretically, response groups support process instruction methods by extending the audience for student writing beyond the teacher. In contrast to traditional classrooms, where writing is seen as a "silent and solitary activity" (Emig, 1979), response groups extend the

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value of a student paper by recognizing the communicative function of student writing.

While the importance of audience for native speakers of English has been much discussed in the writing field (Dipardo and Freedman, 1987; Elbow, 1973, 1981; Fulwiler, 1991; Gere and Abbott, 1985; Zemelman and Daniels, 1988), its role in the writing process of ESL writers has been given less attention. However, ESL writers can benefit from the availability of the expanded audience by developing response patterns similar to those of experienced L_1 writers and broadening their sense of audience awareness in attempts to clarify and amplify meaning.

The use of peer response groups in the classroom, however, is not without obstacles. The kinds of limitations frequently associated with peer response have been detailed by George (1984), Newkirk (1984), and Freedman (1987): students' reluctance to offer negative criticism; the tendency for students to drift away from appropriate tasks; the possibility of their falling prey to inaccurate or bad advice; the exaggerated emphasis on mechanics over content; and the overlooking of problems in the papers. Students in my class, especially those new to response groups, were often uncertain of their role in the peer response process. Moreover, inexperienced writers were unsure how to stand outside their own writing in order to view alternatives, offered by their peers, to their work. As a result of the difficulty in detaching themselves from their composing, writers had a limited idea of what it was they wanted to know from peers about their own papers beyond the basic questions of clarity and mechanical correctness. This was especially true for L_2 writers whose struggles with the basic questions obscured the deeper quest for developing meaningful communication.

The peer response process was additionally complicated when student writers disregarded their peers as valid audiences and, consequently, as valid critics. Native speakers of English often convey to L_2 students that correctness in mechanics has priority over content by rarely focusing or commenting on matters of content. Furthermore, L_2 students are often "left out" when the heart of the discussion is content. L_1 students assume that L_2s will not understand the use of culturally specific terms, as was the case with Jane, and at other times L_1s do not want to take the time to explain the vernacular to their L_2 peers, as demonstrated by Andrew, in the following examples:

1. In a short paper, Jane described the preparation of a special potato dish. The paper she handed in ended with "Bon appetit!" Yet an audiotape of Jane's group does not reveal that ending when the group discussed her paper. When I asked about this, Jane explained that she did not think the L_2 students would "get it"—the reference to the Julia Child TV show--so she just skipped over it.

2. During a responding-to-writing session, Jane, Jennifer, and Andrew laughed at Jane's paper about setting off a smoke alarm in T.J. Maxx. Kenji questioned the word "alarm." Andrew explained that it was the box on the wall that made noise when something was on fire. Kenji further queried, "What is Maxx?" Andrew explained that this is a department store, "like Goldsmith's" and that Jane had set off the smoke alarm. When Kenji did not laugh, Andrew dismissed him with a flippant gesture, "You had to be there." Native English speakers assume that L_2 students will not understand language nuances, slang, or colloquialisms, and in fact, they frequently do not. Consequently, L_1 students become condescending or choose not to deal with content issues.

Britton (1975) purports that lack of experience with alternative audiences makes it difficult for students to write for audiences other than teacher or self. The students in my class were together for only ten weeks and may have been uncomfortable with the social dynamics of the peer response groups, thus limiting their willingness to elicit criticism from the alternative audience. My observation of and teaching experience with response groups in L_1 classes suggests that, as students practice peer group techniques, gaining skill in peer response, they become more comfortable with the process, thereby recognizing the validity of the peer audience. Similarly, Harris (1992) notes that groups become more proficient at responding as they practice response over and over and learn how to function as a group. Time is thus critical in peer response. In classes such as mine that are together for only one semester, the groups may not have enough time to develop their skills in order to function at their best level. Yet, given extended periods of time, peer response groups can and do develop confidence and trust in one another that enable them to become discourse communities (Cintorino, 1994).

The "teacherless" writing groups that many process teachers are familiar with have limited applicability in a multilingual setting because of their dependence upon peer listeners.

Peer response has a twofold value: (1) writers benefit from their peers' responses when those peers have been instructed in giving helpful responses, and (2) responders themselves benefit because they internalize the role of reader and see their own writing more objectively. One purpose of composition courses should be to make students more confident and independent as writers. The use of peer response strategies in linguistically diverse classrooms supports this goal. In addition, for most students, as their abilities as responders improve, their abilities to revise their own compositions also improve because they have a better

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sense of how to approach the task. For ESL writers, peer response has an added value. For those students in the process of new language acquisition, peer response groups offer an occasion to practice their new language in writing as well as orally and aurally with native-speaking peers, practice that is critical to their becoming not simply second language acquirers, but second language users.

Recommendations for Practice

Although writing groups may be a valuable instructional tool for L_2 writers by helping them sustain the writing process and develop audience awareness, it is clear that little is known about how peer response groups can be used most effectually in linguistically diverse classrooms. Whereas some strategies used in L_1 classrooms transfer effectively to the multilingual setting, others clearly do not. The "teacherless" writing groups that many process teachers are familiar with have limited applicability in a multilingual setting because of their dependence upon peer listeners. For students in linguistically diverse groups, the strategy is ineffective because students (L_1 and L_2 alike) need the support of hard copies of texts in order to understand the pronunciation of some words. The strong theoretical rationale for the use of peer response groups and their increasingly widespread use in both L_2 and multilingual settings coupled with conflicting research data create an agenda for better understanding the potential for peer response groups in the teaching and learning of writing.

My observation of and participation with peer response groups in linguistically diverse classrooms lead to several suggestions for composition teachers. Peer response groups in multilingual settings will benefit from the following recommendations:

1. All students, but especially L_2 students who, at every educational level, may be experiencing peer response for the first time, need instruction about the nature and purpose of criticism. L_1 reader-listeners need to understand that an "error hunt" in their L_2 peers' papers is not a valuable approach to the task. Instead, members of effective response groups treat peers' papers as "works in progress" and view their role as supportive reader-listeners suggesting methods for writers to use in sharpening the presentation of an essay.

2. Writers must come to class prepared. In linguistically diverse classes, this includes bringing copies of their papers for peers to follow during the reading. This enhances their peers' abilities to understand writers' intended meanings. In addition, students should bring revised drafts to class. This enables the group to focus their attention on the things that writers could not accomplish on their own.

3. Writers should be taught to think about what kind of assistance they are seeking from the group. As students draft their papers, they can make a list of questions regarding the kind of advice they need so that they can focus the group response. Moreover, in the process of considering questions for the peer group, writers may see options for revision that they previously had not considered.

4. Students need clear, explicit directions for the response process. Students must learn a language of response (Sullivan, 1994) that focuses on the strengths of a piece of writing, because it is the strength of one's writing that a writer must build on. Effective response describes, but does not judge. Telling a writer "That's good" or "That's awful" is not helpful to a writer looking for revision suggestions. Descriptive response, on the other hand ("I am confused here" or "This seems unorganized to me"), is more helpful. Finally, teachers can help students by encouraging them to use language of reflection: "Have you thought about doing it this way?" "How do you think it would sound if . . . ?" The key for students to remember is that they are presenting suggestions. Because inexperienced L_2 writers often do not know what is most effective in their own papers, supportive response lets the writer know that his or her ideas have value to the reader. Modeling the peer response process provides students with a clear conception of what they will be expected to do in their own response groups.

5. Lastly, teachers should reflect with students on the actual progress of their response groups. Teachers should periodically monitor group sessions to determine how efficiently the groups are operating. Having students keep response journals, where they record peer suggestions for revision along with their reactions to such suggestions, and teacher participation in group discussions are ways students and teachers can tell one another if the groups are working or how they might work more effectively.

For teachers, organizing peer response groups in bilingual or multilingual classrooms requires time and effort. Experience and modification of the techniques to fit the individual personalities and needs of the groups are necessary for success with such groups.

The process of becoming independent critics of their own writing is slow for native speakers, but it poses additional problems for ESL students, especially those of limited English proficiency. These writers struggle with a host of problems in order to clarify meaning. Ideally, for L_2 writers to reap the most benefit from response, peer response groups should occur in flexible environments that give attention to the individual needs of writers. Effective environments are supportive ones, guided by the teacher but offering individual writers opportunities to solicit feedback from peers—and the teacher as well—as their needs dictate. ●

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Developing Integrated Language Arts Standards, K–12

by Regina G. Chatel, St. Joseph College, West Hartford, Connecticut

In September 1995, the Hartford Public Schools published *Academic Area Outcomes: Prekindergarten–Grade 12*. The outcomes are considered as a starting point in the improvement of teaching, learning, and curriculum revision based on continuous assessment and accountability. The document delineates student outcomes and assessment by grade level in literacy, English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, foreign language, health, physical education, TESOL, and career readiness. The creation of this document was no small feat in light of the educational, social, political, and economic situation in Hartford.

The Hartford Public School District is the largest school district in Connecticut, enrolling 26,400 students in 32 schools. Enrollment is 93 percent minority, comprised of 50.2 percent Hispanic and 42.8 percent African American. Most of Hartford's students reside in AFDC-dependent households (Assistance to Families with Dependent Children).

During the 1994–95 school year, the Hartford public school system faced a unique educational period. It was experiencing educational innovations on many different levels, among them, changing demographics in Hartford; personnel changes at the building and central office, including a turnover of 20 out of 32 principals within the previous two years; the restructuring of central office staff; and the arrival of Educational Alternatives, Inc., a private for-profit educational management company. Hartford was the only school district in the country to be taken over by a private management firm.

Within these management changes, there was a refocusing on teaching and learning. This was achieved through the curriculum renewal process, which was the outgrowth of the district's strategic plan, *We Believe in Tomorrow: A Framework for the Strategic Direction of the Hartford Public School*. The plan included ten strategic goals that could be summarized in three broad categories: curriculum and student outcomes, parent and community involvement, and school organization and management.

District Teacher and Administrator Input

District teacher and administrator input was gathered through a survey instrument. It should be noted that information was gathered before and during the effort to create a committee which would write the outcomes. Each teacher was asked to write down the unwritten curriculum.

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Teachers and administrators responded to the following questions:

- What should students know at the end of a grade level in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing?
- What should students be able to do at the end of a grade level in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing?
- What are some possible ways to assess students in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing?

The committee facilitator analyzed and synthesized the school-generated curricula, which revealed the following:

- A rich and varied curriculum existed in a few of the grade levels and schools, but this was not consistently evident across the entire district.
- Speaking, listening, and viewing were not consistently addressed in the feedback given by teachers and administrator; those columns were left blank.
- There were two differing philosophies of reading-language arts instruction, one being a skills-based model and the other a meaning-based integrated language arts model.
- Existing curricula did not appear to be responsive to the needs of the Connecticut Mastery Test, which is given statewide in grades 4, 6, and 8, and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, which is given in grade 10.

To address the issue of educational equity for all children, the committee felt it critical to create a unifying curriculum framework and to build upon those elements in the existing curriculum and assessment practices which reflected current research in English language arts.

Creating a Cohesive Document

In order to create a cohesive document, a set of unifying definitions developed by the director of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and staff development guided the development and format of the outcomes:

- Academic Area Outcome = a description of what students should know at the end of each grade level by academic area.
- Assessment of Outcomes = the answer to the question, How do we know they know?

Much discussion focused on the difference between standards and outcomes, the difference between a framework and a guide, and exactly what was meant by assessment. Was the call for assessment to be interpreted as identification of possible assessment tools and measures or a statement of student behavior? The question of performance standards—or "How good is good enough?"—was not addressed by the committees and the final document. That question is being considered in the curriculum-writing process, which is currently in effect.

The Document

The committee grappled with the dilemma of realistic expectations for the given population. Some committee members felt that the outcomes being considered were not achievable by Hartford's students, whereas other members felt that there was nothing that Hartford's students could not achieve if given appropriate instruction and resources. In the end, it was decided that the outcomes had to reflect the highest standards possible and not compromise on achievement. Even though some students would be unable to reach all of the outcomes, the expectation of teachers, students, and parents was that Hartford's goals were high for all children.

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Reflecting on the Framework

Although the *Academic Area Outcomes: Prekindergarten-Grade 12* document was created before the IRA–NCTE standards were released, it is important to review it in light of the most current guidance from the profession. Using the IRA–NCTE standards as the measure, this work examines the philosophy and a sample set of outcomes and assessment to determine the extent to which they reflect these standards.

Literacy Philosophy

The introduction to the outcomes states that Hartford Public Schools' literacy philosophy for prekindergarten through grade 6 is

> to promote learning throughout the educational continuum, utilizing interactive instruction to emphasize the integration of the communication arts throughout the curricula and beyond the school day. Each staff member and pupil must be committed to the rewards of lifelong learning and recognize the diversity of our population as a resource for teaching and learning. Parents and the larger community must also realize the importance of the communication arts in our highly technological society, and become more involved in promoting literacy beyond the school day.

The Hartford literacy philosophy includes a focus on (1) learning as a lifelong process, (2) interactive teaching, (3) integration of the communication arts, (4) recognition of diversity, (5) the parent, school, and community partnership, and (6) the highly technological nature of our society. In addition, the English language arts philosophy, which is a separate philosophical statement for grades 7–12, states that

> The English Language Arts Department seeks to improve students' awareness of the role the English language and its literature play in

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their personal, cultural and career development. The English program emphasizes the development of comprehension, critical thinking, coherence, cogency and fluency as they are reflected in students' reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. It also provides experiences and activities to help students become more appreciative of the arts. We select literary works for excellence in content and style, relevance to student interests, and cultural heritage. Our philosophy is to promote humanistic attitudes, aesthetic, and critical skills to provide a foundation for a lifetime of literary enrichment.

An examination of this statement shows the desire to (1) improve students' awareness of the role that English and its literature play in their personal, cultural, and career development; (2) develop comprehension, critical thinking, coherence, cogency, and fluency as they are reflected in the use of the language arts; (3) develop appreciation of the arts; (4) provide experience with literature which is of literary merit and relevant to students' lives and cultural heritage; (5) promote humanistic attitudes, aesthetic appreciation, and critical skills.

However, two different philosophies, one for literacy development for grades prekindergarten–6 and one for English language arts grades 7–12, are simply unnecessary. The document should have one philosophy for English language arts which encompasses all grade levels. An examination of all grade level outcomes and assessment supports their philosophical continuity and congruence. The existing distinction somehow implies that one develops literacy only through grade 6 and then switches focus to the development of the English language arts upon entering grade 7. In fact, the development of the language arts is all about development of literacy at all grade levels. Therefore, one philosophical statement would serve to unify the language arts across all grades (Chatel, 1996).

A review of the Hartford document in light of the new IRA–NCTE standards shows that it does address each of the dimensions of language learning presented in the standards. Content, purpose, and development are addressed by the outcomes document in that it delineates the what, why, and how of the English language arts at each grade level. The document states that all students will read a broad range of texts and genres, select and apply meaning-making processes and strategies, and study and use standard structures of the English language. The purpose is clearly defined in terms of the language arts being for obtaining and using information, for aesthetic appreciation and expression, for learning from and reflecting on the literary experience, and for problem solving and broader applications to life. Finally, philosophically, the language arts are said to be integrated in purpose, use, and development. This framework is user friendly in that it is clearly divided by content area, has a manageable but comprehensive number of outcomes, states the philosophy of each content area in the introduction, and briefly explains the development of the document, giving it broad community appeal.

The IRA–NCTE standards document attempts to be integrative in nature, but it is this very approach which has led to much criticism.

Further Considerations

Although *Academic Area Outcomes: Prekindergarten–Grade 12* appears to be flawless and a wonderful example of the English language arts standards put into operation, the literacy and the English language arts sections of the document are problematic in three ways: (1) the format which treats each of the language arts separately, (2) the statement of reading at least at grade level for each grade, and (3) the lack of visual representation as a language art.

The problem of format is being grappled with by all educators undertaking curriculum restructuring. How does one write outcomes which encompass all of the language arts? The very nature of dividing the language arts into reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing implies their separateness and contradicts the integrated language arts philosophy espoused in the introduction to the outcomes. The IRA–NCTE standards document attempts to be integrative in nature, but it is this very approach which has led to much criticism.

Second, the statement of reading "at least at grade level" for each grade appears to be a case of the document trying to be all things to all people. The outcomes document is intended to facilitate change in philosophy, teaching, learning, and assessment. Its clarity, organization, comprehensiveness, and research base make it a powerful tool. Yet the use of the phrase "reading at least at grade level" implies that there is such an entity which is achievable, measurable, and desirable. IRA and NCTE have indicated that there can be no expectation that all students in a given grade achieve at the "grade level" for that "grade level" designation on a normed achievement test because it is an indication of the *average* or *range* of scores. This appears to be a politically, and not an educationally, motivated outcome which is essential to the acceptance of the document within the broader Hartford social context.

Finally, the lack of visual representation as a language art is understandable in light of the lack of standards from IRA and NCTE when the document was being developed. Even today, visual representation is not a concept which is fully developed or understood. It should be included in the next revision of *Academic Area Outcomes: Prekindergarten–Grade 12*.

Summary

Academic Area Outcomes: Prekindergarten–Grade 12 is the result of a collaborative effort between the educational community and the broader community within which it exists. Parents, legislators, administrators, and regular and special educators want to know not only about the existing school programs, but about the future directions their schools are going to take. The collaborative writing process attempts to "satisfy a community's reasonable expectation that [schools] provide meaningful information on how they are performing [and future performance expectations]" (Schmoker, 1996, p. 47). In addition, Schmoker states that "people accomplish more together than in isolation; regular, collective dialogue about agreed-upon focus sustains commitment and feeds purpose; [and] effort thrives on concrete evidence of progress" (p. 48). From this perspective, the collaborative effort builds in accountability and ownership for implementation of the new outcomes document. The accountability and ownership place a responsibility on the schools to actually implement the outcomes and on the community to support them. The groundwork for implementation of the outcomes has been prepared by the collaborative nature of its creation.

Finally, *Academic Area Outcomes: Prekindergarten–Grade 12* is intended to facilitate change in the teaching, learning, and assessing of the English language arts and other content areas in Hartford. It is a unifying framework for the development of curriculum guides in that it provides a vision of the high educational goals to which Hartford aspires for all of its children. ●

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Cultivating a Climate for Literacy

by Ruth Townsend, Manhattanville College, Purchase, New York

My friend Stanley is a thinking person. He reads, he listens, and he asks questions. Recently he read NCTE's announcement of a nationwide campaign to define literacy for the twenty-first century for lifelong learning. So he asked me, "What do you teachers mean by literacy for the twenty-first century?"

Good question, I thought, one that got me considering the changing definition of literacy in an increasingly diverse and multilingual culture, one in which technological knowledge has become interdependent with reading and writing. And I thought about NCTE's literacy essentials: the ability to communicate *clearly*, to think *critically*, and to tackle problems *creatively*. The three "Cs" of literacy. Identifying these essentials could give Stanley a definition of literacy for the twenty-first century, but that definition raises another question: How do we teach these three Cs of literacy to all our children not just in the future but in the present as well?

That was the question nagging at me as a teacher, an English educator, when I came across an article on horticulture entitled "The Six Principles of Gardening" by a Father Greenthumb. I liked that title; it was direct and honest and promised guidelines to success. I wondered, was it possible that we teachers could identify as succinctly some basic principles that would give our students promise of success as clear communicators, critical thinkers, and creative problem solvers? Or is the climate for learning for large numbers of our children so contaminated by poverty and indifference, violence and self-abuse that failure and despair seem inevitable? Surely, with children as with gardens failure is never inevitable; even those possessed by "things rank and gross in nature" can be reclaimed by committed effort. So I extended the metaphor to imagine school as a garden and teachers the gardeners applying Father Greenthumb's principles to cultivating a climate for literacy that promotes competence in the three Cs of literacy.

Principle One: A garden is a separate place, away from the world. Enclose it, put up hedges or doorways. Here, Father Greenthumb is reminding us that for gardens to thrive they must be safe places, protected from that which would destroy them. If our schools are committed to literacy for our children, then those schools must be safe, protected places in which children can feel secure and free to learn and grow. For many of our children, school is a sanctuary from an angry, cruel, destructive world. John

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Sanford, superintendent of Seattle city schools, said recently that school is the *only* place where many children will be loved and taught.

This was surely true for writer Lynda Barry (1992), who says that when she was a child her school was indeed her sanctuary. The unrelenting frustration, depression, and anger of her home made Barry invisible to her parents. The only place she could count on being noticed, on being nurtured, was at school. So every morning before daylight, she would slip out of the house and run to school, waiting in the cold and the dark, first for the janitor to arrive and let her in, then for the school secretary who greeted her warmly, and finally for her teacher who always found "important," special things for Barry to do in those early mornings before the other children arrived. In that protected school environment, Barry felt cherished, valued, and worthy to learn.

Barry is one of thousands of children who have found sanctuary in school. I have known many of them, including Carlos, who was born in the Dominican Republic to a drug-addicted mother. Shortly after his birth, his mother left him with his grandmother. When Carlos was five, his mother reclaimed him and took him from the only security he had ever known to New York, the South Bronx, where he was exposed to the violent world of drug addiction and prostitution. Sometimes Carlos was abused by his mother's male friends and sometimes completely ignored by his mother for days. But she did do something for him—she enrolled him in school. There, for the first time in his life, he was introduced to the reassurance of structure and routine, to the magic of stories and the power of literacy. Despite the chaos and destructiveness of his home, at school Carlos found validation of his being and hope for his future. That was enough to enable him to endure his life with his mother until he graduated from high school and entered college on a full scholarship.

The safe garden of school carried Lynda Barry and Carlos through the pain of an unhappy and cruel home to confidence in themselves as worthy, literate individuals. School was their refuge from an indifferent world and their passport to a productive life. For all of our children we must provide a safe place, a nurturing place in which to learn, to grow, to dream, to gain the skills and self-confidence to leave the sanctuary of school and make a better life for themselves and the world a better place than they found it.

Principle Two: Use perennials, including trees and shrubs, and use them abundantly. They're cheaper, they make more of themselves, and they are big. Perennials do make more of themselves—or at least they can. Our students are perennials, rich in the deep colors of experience, passion, hopes, and dreams which they bring to the classroom along with their diverse cultures and backgrounds. This diversity can be the foundation on which we construct curricula that validate children of all heritages and provide them an entry ticket into what Frank Smith (1988) called "the literacy club." But the trick, as Rexford Brown (1993) reminds us, is to put children in charge of their own literacy by encouraging them to write and tell and read their own stories for their own purposes. This active learning empowers them to discover the interconnectedness of language in all aspects of their lives—their culture, their traditions, their language—as part of the rich texture of a literacy that extends beyond mere fluency.

> ***For many of our children, school is a sanctuary from an angry, cruel, destructive world.***

When our children's diverse cultures are honored, like Father Greenthumb's perennials, our children will "make more of themselves and grow big." Miriam Chaplin, past president of NCTE, reminds us that multiculturalism is a philosophy—a philosophy necessary for a true democracy. Clearly we are a multicultural, pluralistic society, which suggests that our curricula must be pluralistic because that's who we are, that's the way we live now and will continue to do so in the twenty-first century.

Principle Three: Use plants that grow easily and seed themselves all over the place. As plants want to grow, children want to learn; it's natural. Our job is to teach them what they need to be able to do and know to be fully franchised citizens in a democratic society—learners for whom technological knowledge is interdependent with reading and writing proficiency, learners who are enabled to construct meaning and allowed to take responsibility for their own learning, learners who strive for excellence, for whom there are no separate expectations, that is, lower standards, for any child. In short, we do whatever we have to do to enable all our children to grow and thrive.

Sadie Delany, to whom we were introduced in the book *The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years* (Hearth, 1994), expressed her definite opinions about education when she was asked how she handled students who failed. She said, "Why, I never failed a student. Not in fifty years of teaching. I worked with the troubled students until they succeeded. I thought it was my job." Sadie believed that every child could succeed, and she taught with that conviction. Teachers throughout the country share Sadie's philosophy. For example, teachers in a heterogeneously composed school in Brooklyn, New York, and another in Georgia designed gifted curricula for all students. In these classrooms, every student is challenged; every student can succeed.

Principle Four: Have something in bloom throughout the

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season. Every day we need something to blossom, and so every day we look for the opportunities to help children learn and grow, to grab the teachable moment, even if that means changing the curriculum, deviating from the lesson plan because we are in school to teach the children, not to serve the curriculum. Bailey White (1994), teacher, writer, and regular commentator on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*, knows how to make learning bloom in her first-grade classroom, but she admits that was not always the case. When she began teaching, she followed the common pattern of having children memorize word lists, read little stories, and construct "cute ideas" out of construction paper. The problem was that the children were only mildly interested in these activities intended to help them become literate. Believing there must be a better way for children to learn, even to want to learn, she discovered maritime disasters. Her students learned new words by singing sea chanteys, and they learned to read by poring over accounts of the sinking of the *Titanic* and its discovery at the bottom of the ocean some 70 years later. Since that educational epiphany, Bailey White has initiated hundreds of children into the literacy club by engaging them in the thrill of maritime disasters and, in so doing, preparing them for the literacy of the future.

Principle Five: Never plant magenta next to taxicab yellow. There are quite a few things to know about color: when you use it with intent, people won't know what you did that makes the garden so great. Father Greenthumb is talking about balance and judgment here. We know how easy it is to be seduced by fads or accept change for its own sake without question. But as educators we know we must avoid the knee-jerk response to jump on the brightly colored bandwagon of innovation or to accept change for the sake of novelty. In a time when technology is changing definitions of literacy and even the very nature of the classroom, we know we must continue to educate ourselves, to become media literate and technologically literate, so that we can judge what is appropriate for our students, to know the costs involved, to recognize the difference between what is merely current and flashy and what is academically sound, and to know what is a wise investment of time and money and what is a waste of resources.

In fact, our sense of balance and judgment is even more crucial now as we see increasing infringements on our freedom to exercise professional judgment in managing our schools, developing our curricula, and structuring our classrooms. These attacks, coupled with the blight of poverty, ignorance, and indifference, threaten our academic freedom today and indeed the very nature of our democratic society in the next century. In communities across America, small, but well-financed and programmed reactionary groups are challenging our professional competence to select the books we teach, the pedagogies we embrace, and the curricula we develop. Attacks from the radical right or left are not new to educators, but what is new is the premeditated, carefully orchestrated nature of current attacks. For example, just recently in a town in Westchester County, New York, two women, aided by groups from outside the community, accused the school system of promoting witchcraft and satanism. You would think that such ridiculous charges would be ignored, but so deliberate and calculated were these attacks that the women's charges generated widespread publicity. One of the charges claimed that an elementary teacher's students, who were studying Hindu myths, were making figures of the god Ganesha in order to pray to them for money. Another charge claimed that a high school teacher, whose students were examining owl pellets of undigested fur and bone to learn about the animals' eating habits, was actually promoting a cult of death. Parents, educators, and residents organized to support the schools and to counter the charges, but clearly the situation and the publicity it sparked required cool heads, balance and judgment, so as not to plant magenta next to taxicab yellow now or in the twenty-first century.

Principle Six: Feed the earth. Give back what you take out; use lots of mulch and everything you can to fortify the soil. A beautiful garden is the result of what you give. You receive in terms of what you have given. This is what teaching is all about, isn't it? We teach because we want to share with our children what we know—what we are able to do, what we love, and what enriches our lives. To that end, we invest in ourselves, modeling a life of learning, a life of compassion, honesty, perseverance, fidelity, and courage. We are committed to educating our students, not merely schooling them. So we read with our students, write with them, learn with them, grow with them.

Father Greenthumb understands gardens, and I think that understanding also applies to teachers as we work to cultivate a climate for literacy. Certainly, both gardeners and teachers must be visionaries who believe in the power of the human spirit to transcend the negative, overcome obstacles, achieve excellence, and in the process receive much more than we have given. ●

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Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

October 1997 (June 15 deadline)
Scripting Virtual Classrooms: The Promise and Paradox of Technology

December 1997 (August 15 deadline)
Alternative Ways of Evaluating

February 1998 (October 15, 1997, deadline)
Guest Editor—Would you like to try your hand at editing the *Quarterly*? For details, contact Henry Kiernan by May 1, 1997.

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Henry Kiernan, Editor, *English Leadership Quarterly*, West Morris Regional High School District, Administration Building, Four Bridges Road, Chester, NJ 07930; phone 908-879-6404, ext. 278; fax 908-879-8861; e-mail hkwmreg@planet.net. ●

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Scripting Virtual Classrooms: The Promise and Paradox of Technology

by Henry Kiernan, editor

In 1930 the English novelist J. G. Ballard wrote: "Science and technology multiply around us. To an increasing extent they dictate the languages in which we speak and think. Either we use those languages, or we remain mute." Imagine what Ballard would have thought of the need for a digital dictionary to explain such terms as edge connectors, embedded commands, and emoticoms.

Aside from the evolving technospeak and cyberspace chatter, I really do enjoy the use of technology and try my best to comprehend the technological lexicon. Yet when our district's network administrator explains the functionality of UNIX servers and T-1 lines, there are times when I feel as if I am trying to interpret a lecture at the Sorbonne from what I remember of high school French.

Since the *Quarterly* approached the theme of technology in the December 1994 issue, much has changed and not always for the better. The Internet has spread into most schools and provides a rich resource of information on any topic. However, most of the important ideas in our culture are not on the Internet, but they are readily available in free public libraries. The emotional bandwidth of English teachers is tested because it is also quite easy to order research papers from varied websites that promise a custom thesis in under two hours.

Furthermore, in "Computers and Classrooms: The Status of Technology in U.S. Schools" (Educational Testing Service, 1997) ETS researchers confirmed that, despite the hype of Netday and other efforts, when it comes to the Internet and multimedia computers, there remains "a persistent pattern of inequality of access" to technology. The ETS report also concurs with other recent studies that most teachers have not been trained adequately to use the new educational technology that is moving into the schools.

This issue's authors provide an update of current practice and leadership in using technology. Their individual and collective voices support the view that technology and computer literacy must involve more than learning how to do a spreadsheet, send e-mail, and put a diskette into a machine. Literacy begins with ideas, and technology works best when it helps us understand powerful ideas.

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Plugging Technology into the English Curriculum

by Mary L. McNabb, Gilbert Taldez, Claudette Rasnaussen, and Jeri Nowakowski North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, Illinois

English as a discipline has been using computer technology, studying its impact, and developing computer applications suitable for the English classroom since the inception of the personal computer in the late 1970s. Word processing, for instance, is a standard competency embedded into the English curriculum at all levels. Word processing is also one of the ISTE Foundation Standards in Technology for all teachers recommended to the National Council for Accreditation of Teaching Education programs. Word processing as we know it today, however, has many features uncharacteristic of its earlier versions when word-processing software emulated an electronic typewriter. Today's computer technology acts as a catalyst of change within the field of English, expanding our notions of literacy beyond print-based, linear narratives and established rhetorical structures.

The new NCTE/IRA English Language Arts Standards reflect the influence that technology is having on the discipline. Standard 1 acknowledges the need for students to be able to "read a wide range of print and nonprint text" (1996, p. 25). Our definition of *text* now explicitly includes multisensory forms of communication as well as print. The effects of nonprint text on literacy development have not been heavily researched, although the question is beginning to emerge as a mainstream concern. In a recent article on the future of language arts research, author Purcell-Gates asks: "Will the cognitive, linguistic, and developmental processes involved in learning to communicate and participate with the electronic world of information be similar to or significantly different from our current understandings of these processes in the reading and writing of paperbased text?" (1997, p. 282).

Although state-of-the-art computer technology makes Purcell-Gates's question relevant to classroom teaching, early applications of computer technology in English language arts may have made some educators skeptical of its usefulness. The 1980s hardware and software approaches often attempted unsuccessfully to mimic teacher activities. Other technology implementation efforts failed because of poor technology planning, implementation, and professional development efforts. The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), a not-for-profit educational research and development organization serving the Midwest, has made "applying research and technology to learning" one of its priorities. As a result, NCREL has developed several products that will guide educators in planning, evaluating, implementing, and using technologies for improving student performance and enhancing teachers' use of computer technology within the curriculum.

Many members of the NCREL staff have devoted considerable time and effort to defining which learning and technology variables are especially important to consider in order to optimize the use of learning technologies in schools. One of NCREL's seminal publications on the topic, entitled *Designing Learning and Technology for Educational Reform* (Jones et al., 1994), examines research on technology and learning. A subsequent report, *Plugging In: Choosing and Using Educational Technology* (Jones et al., 1995), is a resource that has been used extensively in schools through NCREL's midwestern region and beyond, with more than 80,000 copies requested to date. The three major conclusions of *Plugging In* are: (1) technology that does not engage students in learning has limited value in the classroom; (2) technology used

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists, supervisors, coordinators and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

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in conjunction with the most recent research and development findings onengaged learning, however, can help all students achieve in school; (3) learning and technology variables of special significance are those that combine highly engaged learning with interactive, high performance technology. The authors of *Plugging In*, building on a framework developed by Barbara Means and her colleagues at SRI International, identified eight significant variables of engaged learning (see Table 1). Engaged learning is broadly defined: "Engaged learners take an active role in meaningful tasks and activities. Highly engaged learners take increasing responsibility for their own learning, striving for deep understanding through experiences that directly apply to their lives" (Jones, Rasmussen, and Moffitt, 1997, p. 232).

Six variables of high performance technology were identified as especially important if the use of technology was to positively affect learning. These variables are access, operability, organization, engageability, ease of use, and functionality (e.g., Table 2).

Table 1: Indicators of Engaged Learning

Variable	Indicator of Engaged Learning	Indicator Definition
Vision of learning	Responsible for learning	Learner is involved in setting goals, choosing tasks, developing assessments and standards for the tasks; has big picture of learning and next steps
	Strategic	Learner actively develops repertoire of thinking-learning strategies
	Energized by learning	Learner is not dependent on rewards from others; has a passion for learning
	Collaborative	Learner develops new ideas and understanding in conversations and work with others
Tasks	Authentic	Pertains to real world, may be addressed to personal interest
	Challenging	Difficult enough to be interesting but not totally frustrating, usually sustained
	Multidisciplinary	Involves integrating disciplines to solve problems and address issues
Assessment	Performance-based	Involving a performance or demonstration; usually for a real audience and useful purpose
	Generative	Assessments having meaning for learner; maybe produce information, product, service
	Seamless and ongoing	Assessment is part of instruction and vice versa; students learn during assessment
	Equitable	Assessment is culture fair
Teacher roles	Facilitator	Engages in negotiation, stimulates and monitors discussion and project work but does not control
	Guide	Helps students to construct their own meaning by redirecting focus, providing options
	Co-learner/co-investigator	Considers self as learner; willing to take risks to explore ideas outside his or her experience; collaborates with other teachers and practicing professionals
Student roles	Explorer	Students have opportunities to explore new ideas, tools, push the envelope in ideas and research
	Cognitive apprentice	Learning is situated in relationship with mentor, who coaches students to develop
	Teacher	Students encouraged to teach others in formal and informal contexts
	Producer	Students develop products of real use to themselves and others

BY Jones, G. Valdez, J. Nowakowski, & C. Rasmussen. 1995. *PluggingIn: Choosing and Using Educational Technology*. Washington, DC: Council for Educational Development and Research.

Table 2: Indicators of High Technology Performance

Variable	Indicator of High Technology Performance	Indicator Definition
Engageability	Access to challenging tasks	Technology offers or allows access to tasks, data, and learning opportunities that stimulate thought and inquiry
		Technology offers access to simulations, goal-based learning, and real-world problems
	Enables learning by doing	Technology responds intelligently to users and is able to diagnose and prescribe new learning
	Provides guided participation	
Ease of Use	Effective helps	Technology provides help indices that are more than glossaries; may provide procedures for tasks and routines
		Technology facilitates the user and is free from overly complex procedures; user can easily access data and tools on demand
	User friendliness/user control	
		Technology has a fast processing speed and is not "down" for long periods of time Training is readily and conveniently available, as is ongoing support
	Fast	
	Available training and support	Technology allows for random access, multiple points of entry, and different levels and types of information
	Provides just enough information just in time	
Functionality	Diverse tools Media use	Technology enables access to full diversity of generic and context-specific tools basic to learning and working in the 21st century
	Promotes programming and authoring	Technology provides opportunities to use media technologies
	Supports project	Technology provides tools (e.g., "wizards") that are used to make other tools Technology facilitates the
	design skills	development of skills related to project design and implementation

BY Jones, G. Valdez, J. Nowakowski, & C. Rasmussen. *1995. PluggingIn: Choosing and UsingEducational Technology*. Washington, DC: Council for Educational Development and Research.

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Plugging In, using the indicators described above, constitutes a technology effectiveness framework that helps to define the powerful intersection of learning and technology performance. As illustrated in Figure 1, the horizontal axis is learning, which progresses from passive at the low end of the continuum to engaged at the high end. The vertical axis is technology performance, which progresses from low to high. Some examples of the more powerful uses of technology to support engaged learning are identified in quadrants B and A.

The technology effectiveness framework from *Plugging In* underlies the design of the *Teaching and Learning with Technology* series of interactive CD-ROMs that NCREL recently developed for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. These resources serve as tools for policy makers and practitioners to self-assess their current choices and uses of technology and to thoughtfully plan for powerful uses of interactive technology to support engaged learning.

Other NCREL products and services that address concerns related to using technology for learning include web servers such as *Pathways to School Improvement (1997)* and *Learning Through Technology: A Planning and Implementation Guide (1997)*, both of which have won awards as exemplary educational Internet resources. The *Learning Through Technology* website is specifically aimed at scaffolding the technology planning and implementation process for technology planning committees. It helps educators and community members develop a comprehensive learning and technology plan. *Learning Through Technology is* divided into six sections: planning to plan, building a knowledge base, establishing general directions, implementing priorities and strategies, evaluating progress, and institutionalizing technology. It also contains profiles of practice from fifteen Illinois State Board of Educa- tion engaged learning and technology demonstration schools. Many of these schools have developed websites that include their own Technology Plan and Internet Usage Policies, which provide useful guidelines for managing students' use of the Internet as a virtual classroom. While computer technologies impact virtually all facets of our society, English language arts educators have a unique place within the educational arena as they help prepare today's students to be literate in tomorrow's culture. Alan Purves, in his keynote address at the *1996* Literacy and Technology for the 21st Century Conference, summarized landmarks in literacy dating back to 2000 BCE. He concluded with a vignette that describes an English student's virtual classroom experience:

> The web was being spun on the screen and in her head .... The strands grew and shrank, merged and separated only to merge again. The whole began to form in her mind, and Magda the gatherer turned into Magda the weaver, and finally into Magda the author bringing it all together into a hypermedia presentation, a web of icons through which were texts, sounds, pictures, and moving images. Somehow, magically, as if with a life of their own, they coalesced into a cre ation: this is what has happened to writing. (Purves, 1996, p. 9)

While computer technologies impact virtually all facets of our society, English language arts educators have a unique place within the educational arena as they help prepare today's students to be literate in tomorrow's culture.

Figure 1. The learning and technology interface.

Passive Learning

(C)

Examples

Closed integrated learning systems focusing on low level objectives and standardized, objective assessments

Traditional distance education used to transmit information from a central source and focused on low level objectives and assessments (talking head)

Connections to homes that are linked only to closed networks for the school and vendor and perhaps to other schools using the same vendor

(D)

Examples

Computer-based instruction, drill, and practice focusing on low level objectives

Video and audio used to transmit information as a lecture or talking head

Instructional television focused on low level objectives

Teaching a computer language or word processing as an end in itself as technology literacy

Engaged Learning

(A)

Examples

Networked projects with challenging tasks, access to Internet, integrated multimedia capabilities including CD-ROM, two-way video conferencing, access to professionals

Distance education networked with computers; challenging tasks; linked to work with real-world professionals and data; two-way video

Advanced tools and *high technology museum* exhibits that are interactive and support high-level thinking

(B)

Examples

Projects using multimedia experiences and data provided by CD-ROM for authentic and challenging learning

Local file sharing allowing students access to all files for communal editing and development

E-mail for inquiry collaborations

State network support for schools using the Internet for projects

B.F. Jones, G. Valdez, J. Nowakowski, & C. Rasmussen. 1994. *Designing. Learning and Technology for Educational Reform.* Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

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Many English language arts educators involved with infusing computers into their classrooms would agree that computer technology not only enhances the curriculum, but also changes it (Selfe and Hilligoss, 1994, p. 1).

Several researchers have developed models for looking at how well computers have been incorporated into the English language arts curriculum. In the early stage of implementation, Rodrigues and Rodrigues found that software is often viewed by teachers as "an add on" (1994, p. 392). Similarly, Pennington notes that word processing is used as a notepad and tool for surface-level editing and text production by teachers new to computers in the classroom (1993, p. 65). Anandam's model of technology implementation states that, in the beginning, teachers have only a working knowledge of software and hardware used in English language arts and need to go through several reiterative cycles of awareness, assimilation, and accommodation before innovation in pedagogy occurs (1991, p. 3).

As teachers, students, and the institutions in which they work become more familiar with computer applications, the nature of computer usage typically changes. According to Anandam, the teachers' and students' roles and institutional structure change through time and with hands-on experience with technology in the curriculum (1991, p. 4). Eventually as technology becomes fully integrated in teaching and learning, the flow of activity becomes transformed from a teacher-transmission mode to a more engaged learner mode. Pennington's model of technology implementation into English language arts explains how computer usage increasingly impacts the deep structural level of pedagogy and becomes a tool for stimulating cognitive activity at all levels of the reading and writing processes (1993, p. 70). Computers serve as a "telescope" to expanding human understanding in more advanced stages of implementation, according to Rodrigues and Rodrigues (1994, p. 398). Historically there has been a synergistic relationship between technology and the nature of literacy (McNabb, 1997, p. 10); the printing press has greatly influenced methods of teaching and learning during the past 500 years. One may anticipate that the networked, multimedia computer station will profoundly affect teaching and learning in English language arts in the years to come. Indeed, technology infrastructures already allow for creating hypertext structures, connections to authentic audiences, and manipulation of print and nonprint texts in ways unattainable a mere ten years ago. While we may be unable to foresee all the technology innovations of the future that will affect teaching and learning, we can draw on the existing knowledge base and the expertise of those experienced in using computers in the classroom to help plan and implement technology effectively.

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Of Paradox and Partnership

by Janet M. Beyersdorfer, Community, Consolidated School District #21, Wheeling, Illinois

Paradox provokes philosophical change. Through paradox we are presented with a verbal puzzle of seemingly self-contradictory or contradictory statements offered as truth. The conflicting statements drive us to reestablish our cognitive equilibrium and change our philosophy. Educators encounter paradox when truths about successful, traditional literacy activities conflict with emerging truths about the effective use of technology. As we resolve the paradox, we obliquely or directly confront the perceived loss or corruption of core beliefs and values about language and literature. These conflicts seem to be centered around the nature of communication, the integrity of language, and the role of creativity and collaboration in the reading and writing process.

The increasing outcry for student use of electronic communication technologies challenges us to modify our traditional definition of literacy. Our experiences and the educational community's research findings acknowledge the importance of acquiring proficiency with software applications and computer networks as well as with pen and paper. However, we look for guidance when planning instruction that incorporates technology, particularly when we must simultaneously teach the students both the content curriculum and how to use the technology.

Unfortunately, we cannot always locate research findings to help us make decisions about how best to incorporate technology into the curriculum. Researchers are struggling to keep pace with the rapid expansion of technology use, the advances in hardware and software development, the wide range of social issues such as equity and accessibility, and the variety of instructional settings in which technology is used. Furthermore, just as different approaches to literacy education generate heated debate, Baines points out that there are conflicting messages from tech nology advocates. He offers this example: (1) technology makes learning almost effortless, and (2) students must use and become immersed in a technologically sophisticated environment in order to be intellectually challenged (1997, p. 495). Clearly, there is no gracious consensus among the experts within this field just as there are conflicting positions among English educators on key issues about language and literature. Teachers must forge a flexible truce that bridges existing and emerging literacy requirements.

Paradox Found and Paradise Lost

English educators share a vision of a literate society that respects and cherishes written and oral communication. We appreciate books and find joy in the rituals of reading-browsing the library or bookstore shelves, reading reviews and anticipating new titles from favorite authors, sipping coffee as we eavesdrop upon an author's experiences or viewpoints. This is reading done to nurture the spirit, to help explain life events, to console the heart. Thomas Moore, a modern-day philosopher and author, cautions that "the current tendency to shrink thought to information and analysis, to present data as though it were reflection, and to make books that lack the special soul that a book can have, is contributing significantly to the disenchantment of modern life" (1996, p. 252). As we select a book and cuddle into our chair, we are primarily looking for community and contemplation, not information. We are engaging in the rituals of reading.

We also have rituals about writing. We write when we are "in the mood" -whether we discover something about ourselves through journal keeping or when we need to share our thoughts with a trusted friend. We write letters or send cards to celebrate specific occasions or to console someone with our presence. We select formal or whimsical stationery, the thickness of the pen's point, and the ink's color. Even the postage stamps we purchase make a statement about our interests in art, history, sports, or nature.

It is not surprising, given the nature and rate of technological change, that we ask questions such as: How might technology change our existing reading and writing rituals? Must a gifted writer have a high level of technical skill? Will CD-ROMs and electronic databanks become treasured literary artifacts? Will our current notion of a literate society become a Paradise Lost within the global network? Responding to questions like these may help us establish a companionable partnership with technology that is essential to successfully scripting virtual classrooms.

Resolving the Paradox

Teachers can tacitly accept or thoughtfully resolve the issues intrinsic to such a philosophical change. The process of scripting an electronic classroom may seem contradictory to strongly held beliefs about literacy issues as well as past experiences with reading and writing instruction. Furthermore, an obsolete perspective seems strengthened if the belief is shared by respected colleagues. Nevertheless, the paradox is inescapable and demands resolution. The role of communication technology is inextricably intertwined with the nature of literacy and the selection of literacy activities.

Merging recently accepted beliefs about technology use with existing beliefs about language and literature is a formidable task. We will transform our definition of literacy which, in turn, will suggest a reprioritizing of instructional objectives and classroom activities. As this process continues, we may experience a strong emotional reaction to the shift in our fundamental beliefs and values about literacy. These reactions signal that we are confronting a transformation in our understanding of the nature of communication, the

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integrity of language, and the role of creativity and collaboration in the reading and writing process. Only after we have considered these challenges can we apply our new insights about literacy within the culture and resources of our classrooms or workplaces.

Challenges to the Nature of Communication

Our curriculum, in part, encourages students to experiment with writing formats appropriate for specific social situations and to discuss texts that present archetypal characters, conflicts, and symbols. Teachers hope that, through these personal experiences with written language, the student may come to better understand self and others. Technology use does not discourage such exploration by students, but the content and function of current communication networks are not the same as the traditional purposes underlying our

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study of written language. Does an accomplished author or reader need to be well versed in the use of several operating systems and software applications? As Stoll (1995) asks, "Should we expect everyone to become a digital polyglot?"

Electronic communication formats (word processing, e-mail, World Wide Web pages, video teleconferencing, hypermedia) and their artifacts (data storage and retrieval systems, scanners, digital cameras) have become more accessible, affordable, and conspicuous. Business executives, office personnel, health care professionals, and others routinely use electronic communication networks to read reports, collect and share data, collaborate with interested parties about a project, keep a journal, or write a letter. Nor is this electronic culture a workplace phenomenon. Although the distribution of technology varies by socioeconomic status and geographic location, computers are part of the furniture in one of every three homes in the United States today (West, 1995, p. 10). Electronic communication systems have introduced Americans to network shopping, chat rooms, and e-mail.

Conventional literacy activities are not conducted in the familiar manner or in the traditional location. Not only can we use mail merge to instantly prepare personalized copies of a company memo for our colleagues, but we can fax reports from our cars or e-mail letters while sitting on the beach. Bookstores, libraries, and computer stores are all places where we can find reading material; however, we might expect the ambiance of each location to be very different because they represent different aspects of our culture. Now, these aspects are blended so that bookstores sell networking guides and software application manuals while computer stores offer CD-ROM references and storybooks. Moore writes: "A book is a book, and in these times in particular, when information is becoming available in many different formats,especially on computers, it may be important to remember that a book is more than its text. It has a presence, and in that presence lies its magic" (1996, p. 252). Bookstores have always been magical places for English educators, but computer stores may have enchantment as well.

Challenges to the Integrity of Language

English teachers face challenges to the integrity of language as its forms and conventions change. We must come to understand that the sincerity and honesty of the written work are not a function of its form or of the conventions which an author honors or disregards. Written expression can be the message quickly scribbled on notebook paper and passed to a friend or colleague; a journal of poetry and prose; the laboriously prepared manuscript synthesizing an author's perspective of a situation, an event, or a theory; or the phone conversation in which the speakers analyze the tone and inflection of the other to understand unsaid truths and unstated emotions. It may also be a hastily written e-mail message, a word-processed document that incorporates drawings and photographs, or a multimedia slide show. English teachers measure the quality of language in all of its varied forms of expression and identify some of the finest pieces written throughout history.

The study of literature allows us to honor the written word's role in disseminating, shaping, and recording world events. Indeed, literature records a history of humanity, and English teachers mark the passage of time with citations from great works by gifted authors. Handwritten journals, diaries, letters, and now-famous texts describe events by reflecting the intensity of the author's emotions and the impact of the events upon those individuals.

In a technologically minded society, members mark time by identifying the year in which an individual invented a particular machine or introduced an industrial process. Although English teachers note that the invention of the printing press allowed the written word to become a force for social change, what was written and by whom is viewed as the more significant act.

Communicating over electronic networks is much less about paying attention to text structure and phrasing and much more about completing a transaction with speed and terseness. Crafting language with care to nuance and form is not at the heart of electronic communication. Typing speed may be more critical to expressing oneself in electronic environments than is facility with language. This situation is difficult for English teachers to accept because we prefer to deliberate over the phrasing of our ideas. Correct grammar is essential to people writing "snail mail" letters or electronic mail; however, e-mail style manuals offer strikingly different advice than that customarily given about letter writing. For example, Angell and Heslop advise e-mail users to "use contractions to make your message friendly" (1994, p. 56). Another

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suggestion seems to run counter to traditional purposes and forms of writing: "Organize your thoughts according to the way your reader thinks about the subject. Keep in mind that the reader wants the results of your thinking, not the thinking itself' (p. 23). Nevertheless, electronic communication formats have different social and literary conventions than those transactions conducted with pen and paper. When composing e-mail, the author is writing hurriedly, and the reader's expectations are quite different regarding the text's style and form. The evaluator's rubric must reflect these alterations in writing purposes, formats, and conventions for communication produced and sent by using technology.

Another convention of electronic communication that speaks to the new etiquette (called netiquette) of interpersonal communication is the emot-icon. Emot-icons are a keyboard shorthand constructed from groupings of punctuation marks or letters and used by the author to express emotions such as happiness :-) or sadness :-(. Emot-icons can be

Communicating over electronic networks is much less about paying attention to text structure and phrasing and much more about completing a transaction with speed and terseness.

quite sophisticated with symbol sets that allow the writer to express apathy :- I or skepticism :-/ toward a situation. The mere existence of a device designed to circumvent the sharing of feelings stands in conflict with the traditional values of interpersonal communication. For many of us, conversations (oral or written) are primarily about how we feel about an event and less significantly about the event's retelling. When we respond to a friend's words, we enter into a transaction that includes the praxis of the conversation-the when, where, why, and how of the dialogue. Any attempt to limit the information we receive disguises the issues, causes us frustration, and prevents us from responding appropriately.

Challenges to Creativity and Collaboration

Consider this split-screen image. On the right, a Greek deity descends to the stage, using cumbersome wooden machinery. The god has arrived to intervene in the action of the play and settle a seemingly irresolvable conflict between the characters-a playwright's device called the deus ex machina. On the left of the screen, a computer settles into a classroom workstation and students transform into highly motivated, productive, high-achieving individuals. The technology responsible for the rescue has changed-from a chariot to computer hardware, from a superhuman being to software written by technicians and engineers. Nevertheless, the effect of the god in the machine, the deus ex machina, remains the same-the complex problem is solved without direct human initiative. However, computers may well be the deus ex machina spurring the public's commitment to literacy education and educational reform. If so, teachers will want a hand in pulling the strings of the stage machinery.

Unfortunately, a problem does exist in modern society's application of this dramatic device to technology. The Greeks and Romans saw no conflict in a god in a machine rescuing man; this mysterious and often capricious action by the gods was in harmony with the culture's values and beliefs. However, not only have educators become skeptical of such miraculous interventions, but they may believe that the demand for technology use is an inadequate, even superficial, response to complex problems regarding literacy development. Further, they may hesitate to accept technology as a teaching partner because the functions and interactions between machine and human seem contradictory to long-held and passionate beliefs about language, the skills and talents of an articulate individual, and the nature of communication.

Word-processing software can serve as a clear illustration of the mystique of the computer as a deus ex machina. The effect of word processing upon students' writing process has been studied for more than fifteen years. A meta-analysis conducted by Roblyer, Castine, and King (1988) and an article by Hawisher (1987) describe the research on writing and word-processing skills conducted prior to the late 1980s. Recent research extends this work. Current studies describe the research shift from a focus on isolated skills to "an increased attention to grounding research designs in theoretical frameworks" (Reed, 1996, p. 418). This shift underscores our need to understand the merits and weaknesses of word processing within the research findings on writing process. Researchers have found that writing fluency, writing quality, and syntactic complexity often are increased through the students' use of word-processing software (Moore, 1989; Reed, 1992). Additional benefits might be gained as students independently interact with the program to select a document template, use the cut-and-paste functions of the word processor to edit and revise their work, and manipulate editing functions such as a spell checker, the thesaurus, and the style-grammar assistants.

Further complicating this issue of creativity and collaboration is the understanding that the software developer is always collaborating with the author through the design of the application. Even the author's choice of a particular word-processing, composing, or multimedia program can influence the way the manuscript is presented to the reader. For example, multimedia programs vary widely in technical sophistication, the level of user expertise necessary for optimal use of its functions, and the support offered, through online help or print materials. Nevertheless, writers can now link text, audio, video, and graphics within

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presentations or allow the reader to select one of several paths through the information. The author is constrained by the software developer's level of technical expertise and understanding of literacy development. Reciprocally, authors can only compose and present ideas within the limits of their technical expertise. Therefore, the software developer contributes to the author's expression and the author's expression is restrained by technological expertise and the availability of sophisticated software and hardware.

Software used for composing documents now shares with teachers and peers the role of an interactive contributor and respondent guiding the writer during the manuscript's development. Within this collegial affiliation, teachers must find a way to honor a core belief that meaningful, interpersonal interactions are essential to the students during their writing process. As these beliefs merge, the teacher's philosophy about written language is reshaped, and instructional procedures can be redesigned to include technology. As teachers begin this process, Stoll offers these words of caution: "What's most important in school? Working with good teachers who can convey methods as well as content .... In this sense, network access is irrelevant to schooling-it can only prevent this type of interaction. The computer is a barrier to close teaching relationships .... [The students are] learning at arm's length" (1995, p. 118). Writing instruction is push-up-your-sleeves-and-dig-in activity with intense interpersonal interactions; the author-editor relationship is not easily managed at the emotional arm's length that the impersonal software offers.

Moving into Partnership

Philosophers speak of resolving a paradox by appealing to concepts that are well established scientifically or mathematically. Unfortunately these concepts are not stable because the partnership between literacy and technology is evolving rapidly. Furthermore, sometimes we can resolve the paradox only if we change our assumptions about what we know to be true. Educators who attempt to script virtual classrooms while resisting a new understanding of literacy in an electronic age are unlikely to be successful. Educators committed to literacy issues must become partners with technology because we have a unique understanding and appreciation for

Educators who attempt to -script virtual classroonas while resisting a new understanding of literacy in an electronic age are unlikely to be successful.

language and literature. Our valuable perspective can be lost during society's frantic race toward a technologically sophisticated future. If we fail to undertake this role, libraries may become networks of digitized data stored in elaborately linked retrieval systems and searched across great distances. Patrons would no longer need to enter a library to locate information, but could log on to these networked information resource centers. Imagine a library without books! That would truly be Paradise Lost.

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Getting the Most from E-Mail: High School and College Students Responding to Literature

by Helen Dale, University of Ifisconsin-Eau Claire, and Carla Traun, Altoona High School, Wisconsin

It seems that school districts across the nation are in a race to win the technology war: Which district will have the highest ratio of computers per student? Which will receive the most grants for sophisticated uses of technology? Which will develop the most comprehensive approach to teaming with technology? The assumption is that to "win" this race a school needs the fastest and most innovative technology; that is not necessarily the case. For English/ language arts classes, relatively unsophisticated computer technology can be enough to enhance student teaming.

We have developed a collaborative e-mail exchange for our studentshigh school juniors and seniors and university English education majors. Each of us had a different motivation for wanting our students to learn from one another. As a high school teacher, Carla hoped her students could be part of a teaming community that would provide a wider audience. Helen wanted her future English teachers to correspond with real students, not just read about them. While these college students have only been out of high school for a few years, many have forgotten what it means to be a novice reader-writer and how high school students perceive the world. They could also gain experience by responding to student writing and encouraging younger students to broaden their range of responses to literature. The exchange consisted of three stages. First, partners corresponded to get to know each other as "people," not merely as students or future teachers. Next, Carla's students wrote response journals after reading each chapter of *The Great Gatsby*, and Helen's English methods students responded to the journals. That stage of the exchange is the focus of this article. Once the high school students had finished reading the novel, they wrote drafts of a literary research paper, for which Helen's students provided feedback.

When the project was initiated three years ago, Carla's high school did not have e-mail technology, so the students used paper and pen to respond. Each time Carla accumulated response journals from a few chapters, she would make a "paper drop" at Helen's, who luckily lived nearby. At the next methods class, Helen would distribute the journals to her students. The students would comment on them and return them to Helen, who then had to arrange another "paper drop" with Carla.

While the high school students appreciated the input they got from their assigned college partners, by the time they got the responses, they were several chapters ahead in the book and were no longer concerned with their earlier questions and predictions. One of the high school students wrote, "The questions and the comments on the journals helped me think. They would have been a little more helpful if . . . we would have received feedback between the journals instead of after a week." Despite the time lag, both teachers and students felt the project was worthwhile. Still, we teachers envisioned a less cumbersome process, one that would not frustrate us or our students. As one of Helen's students wrote in an evaluation of the exchange, "I think that if we could have responded after each chapter, Carla's students might have had `deeper' journal entries."

The time lag inherent in the paperand-pen exchange was eliminated in the 1996r-97 school year when Carla's school was networked, creating an expedient solution to our problem. E-mail is an increasingly available technology that is relatively simple to use. However, when students have e-mail access, they tend to write electronic notes to their friends rather than use the technology for academic reasons. Our exchange allowed Carla's students to experience the potential of e-mail for authentic leaming.

The availability of e-mail improved the logistics of the exchange as well as the quality of the dialogue. Because the high school students could anticipate a quick response from their college writing partners, they read more faithfully and carefully than they would have for a less immediate response. On days when chapters were due, the students came to class eager to log on to get their mail. After responding to their writing partner's questions and comments, they would focus on the assigned chapter, e-mailing questions, opinions, and predictions.

Class time was used for e-mailing because Carla's students, like most middle and high school students, did not have flexible schedules that would guarantee computer access. There were many benefits to using class time for e-mail exchanges, some anticipated and some not. One of the most obvious benefits was that students wrote more than in the days before e-mail. A simple explanation is that most young people can type more quickly than they can write by hand. Another

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explanation is that they were more focused on writing during class time than they would have been while writing response journals as homework. The availability of e-mail also freed them from the constraints associated with writing or typing on paper. The ease of revision and the informality of the medium not onlymade writing enjoyable, but also allowed students to focus more on content than on form. As one of Carla's students commented, "It was like having a conversation with a friend that had a point." The culture of the class became one of involved response.

The computer lab became a student-led discussion center. Rather than just e-mail their responses, students talked aloud to the screen, to each other, and to Carla. This was much different than a traditional teacher-led discussion, and much better. They voiced genuine responses, ones they might have been hesitant to express in a formal class discussion. Much of the talk was prompted by the college students' comments and questions on the screen. Because Carla's students initiated the questions and comments, they created their own learning community in the lab.

But this was not an isolated learning community. The college students involved in this e-mail exchange were also enthusiastic partners, valuing what one student expressed as the "hands-on, make-you-feel-like-ateacher" experience. Part of that experience was responding to student papers for the first time. When the exchange was done with paper and pen, the methods students responded in traditional ways with a "Good!" or a "Nice idea!" in the margins. But with e-mail technology, the focus changed from commenting on the writing itself to corresponding about literature. The exchanges became less

The exchanges became less like grading and more like letter writing, which offered the high school students more and better feedback than any individual teacher could provide.

like grading and more like letter writing, which offered the high school students more and better feedback than any individual teacher could provide. The methods students became invested in their partner's reading. As one of them commented, being e-mail partners "allowed us to 'hear' what students were thinking about as they read a novel." When one of the high school students questioned where the climax of the book occurred, his partner praised him for his thoughtful reading and encouraged him to continue questioning the text: *High school student:* If you think that Gatsby is the main character in the book, then chapter 8 could be considered a climax, where on the other hand, if you consider Nick Carraway to be the main character, then chapter 7 was probably the climax. All depends on your opinion. *College student:* EXCELLENT reading. You did what a good reader of literature should do. You took the information the book offered you and created options

> Taking some ownership of the text by deciding issues for yourself is very important and usually interesting As far as my personal opinion-I'm undecided.

By encouraging students to "per-sonalize" their responses to literature, emphasizing that there are no right answers to literature, and posing thought-provoking questions, the college students prompted more mature readings of *The Great Gatsby* than Carla had observed in previous years. Because the high school students asked complex questions, the methods students had to explain their own thinking. This forced the college students to examine their own reading habits, an important metacognitive process for future teachers. One student acknowledged that being a writing partner "made me reflect on my own reading and comprehension habits." By using "basic" computer technology and designing a simple project, both students and teachers benefited from the literacy community we had created. This type of project can be implemented with or without e-mail, with writers of any age, and between schools that may be miles apart. It even offers more possibilities as technology grows. One high school student remarked that he would have enjoyed the exchange even more if students could have talked through their computers. Perhaps his desire is not farfetched. For now, as educators, we just need to devise ways to use available technology to promote student learning. That, after all, is the goal of any race for technology.

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Toward an Appropriate Technology in Education

by Ronald T. Sion, St. Raphael Academy, Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Many definitions have been offered by noted scholars for the term *technology*. For example, as quoted by McGinn, Singer et al. in their *History of Technology* define technology as "what things are done or made" and "how things are done or made," while Mesthene defines it as "the organization of knowledge for the achievement of practical purposes" (McGinn, 1990). McGinn also cites Schon, who indicates that technology means "any tool or technique, any product or process, any physical equipment or method of doing, or making, by which human capability is extended" (1990, p. 10). Barbour's definition, "the application of organized knowledge to practical tasks by ordered systems of people and machines" (1993, p. 3), seems to include all these definitions and serves as the basis of this article. Hence, both education, a process, and the computer, a machine, clearly qualify as technologies.

Protagonist or Antagonist: The Computer in Education

In "Four Philosophies of Technology," Drengson (1990) offers four attitudes towards technology that he views as akin to a developmental process. "Technological anarchy" came into being at the outset of the industrial development of the West a nd reigned through most of the nineteenth century. This optimistic, self-centered, and insatiably curious zeitgeist maintained that society would do whatever is necessary to stimulate, encourage, and foster technological advancement at any cost. In turn, humanity would experience the resultant wealth and power that are realized in taming nature and manufacturing an endless stream of technological marvels. Usually this attitude becomes less dominant with the technological maturational development of a specific culture.

"Technophilia" is a philosophy analogous to the love of adolescence. Humans become so enamored with their technological wonders that the devices become toys. The identification with them obliterates their separateness so that the objects of their love tend to control them. Life, unfortunately, becomes more mechanized as a result. The fear of technology's autonomy and the angst precipitated by a dehumanizing relationship with it often generate an attitude of "technophobia."

Technophobia is as real as any other phobia. Threatened by the prospect of technology being in control and autonomous and dehumanizing the world, humanity responds radically with a distrust for all complex technologies and a desire to bring technology back under human control, albeit it has been there all along. This correction can be seen as an evolving maturational process leading to the final phase "appropriate technology." Here is the very apex of technological development wherein diversity is preserved, energy is used wisely, and costs are balanced while human development is promoted and there is a benign interaction between "humans, their machines and the biosphere" (Drengson, 1990, p. 32).

In This Corner

A serious battle is now taking place in most institutions of learning across the United States. We can call this battle the conflict between the "technophiles" and the "technophobes"; the weapon of choice-the computer. The technophiles have been lured into the competitive arena where one school system flexes its muscles at another, with the only measure of its strength being the quantity and quality of machines and software programs housed within its walls. There is little to no long-term measured assessment of its value in the learning process. One may get lost and never reach his or her destination as readily on the "thrilling" information highway as one did in the slow lane of the teacher-directed classroom.

Admittedly some technophobes are true to their name purely out of a valid fear of the unknown. They are untrained and believe that the computer may be used as a legitimate means of replacing them and their "traditional" methods. On the other hand, there are those who have joined this camp out of a sense of disillusionment. They are the ones who supported the promise of the "data merchants" (Roszak, 1994) and the administrators who told them that the computer would not only ease their burden and make the educational process enjoyable, but it would improve the quality of learning. These soldiers on the front lines have been wounded by their experiences and have found that the medium has become the message and that, as Roszak has critiqued, information and process are not equivalent to knowledge.

The following brief example is offered to demonstrate plainly how one educator came to appreciate the appropriate place of the computer as a word-processing function within the English classroom. Rather than believe that the computer can do no wrong (and of itself it cannot, except for the expectation of its human operators), or believe that it should be totally discarded, the technological paradigm shift of today requires a responsible, mature attitude toward the computer in the educational world, one that is not fixated at any limited or limiting stage of development.

The Computer in the English Classroom

Five years ago, as English department chairperson at St. Raphael Academy, I implemented an elective course open to juniors and seniors. They were to meet with me daily in the newly renovated computer lab to draft compositions. Their goal was to improve their writing skills by operat-

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ing at their own pace at their computer station.

Equipped with their own diskette and a user-friendly software program, the students sat four at a table, with a printer in the center of each work station. The students came to the front desk to select their writing framework. Each writing assignment contained a description of objectives and goals, a clear indication of length and expectation, and a grammatical and stylistic focus. In addition, attached to each framework were several examples of professional and student writings on the topic. The goal was for students to offer at least ten of their best writings in a comprehensive portfolio that would be submitted in lieu of a final examination at the conclusion of the semester.

The daily procedure was for the student to initially submit the first draft of the work. I would return it expeditiously with a checklist and rubric attached to the hard copy. Eventually, students were asked to provide peer evaluations through a software program. At first I was delighted with the sound of fingers hitting keys and printers running and all students operating at their own pace, absorbed in their world of written communication. Certainly this type of course could be taught without the use of computers. However, what an amazing tool this was for the writing process. Drafts could now be reworked without the tedious, time-consuming aspects of writing the entire paper all over again by hand. However, certain problems in the system swiftly surfaced. Students believed that, because they used the spell check, they did not need to proofread their work. But most software programs do not know the difference between the uses of "their" and "there" and the multitude of other words commonly misused. In addition, the students viewed the machine as the producer of a perfect product. They failed to consider the repetition of words, missing phrases, or the awkwardness of phrasing

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because, once the assignment was typed and spell checked, the students believed it to be proper for submission. The speed at which papers were printed for my reading produced such a backlog that students were often two frameworks ahead of me before I could read all of their work and meet with them individually. Unfortunately, the number of times that essays were accidentally erased or paper misfed or programs malfunctioned became so rampant that a great measure of my time was spent in mechanical work and was lost to assisting the students with their writing skills, the primary purpose of the elective. On a number of occasions it would have been advantageous if we had reverted to the old longhand method. By the way, some students elected to do this out of a need to feel the flow of their words onto paper. They worked at desks available nearby.

Hence, there was a rapid movement on my part and the part of some students from a technophilia to a technophobia posture. However, patience and determination were exercised in trying to come to an appropriate compromise.

Some of the corrective measures included assigning several technologically astute and trained students within the class to assist with mechanical problems as they materialized so as to free my time. In addition, severe penalties were implemented if students failed to proofread their works several times or if they failed to ask each other for assistance in proofing their works before submitting them. For example, if a draft were submitted with any one of a list of twelve unacceptable errors, it would be recorded as a failure until it was corrected, and even then its final grade would be reduced by one letter grade.

One interesting feature was that, although the screen displayed the student's writing, many students failed to detect errors in syntax, grammar, or sentence structure, and most certainly had great difficulty in revising their approach unless they worked off a tangible printed copy. Hence, every student was required to print out a draft and proof and revise it before making corrections on the screen. The screen in some ways distorted or "hid" from the students the need for correction.

On the whole, the experience was a sound one and the Writers Forum course is still a very popular elective today. However, the entire program had to develop and mature in its recognition of the strengths and limitations of the use of the computer in the writing process.

Technology and Education: A Holistic Model

Technology is a transient occupant of our universe. It is ever-present yet ever-changing in both the "what" and the "how" of doing things. "Our relationship to our creation is ambiguous"-we cannot get along without it, but we ponder whether it is getting out of our control (Dugger and Yung, 1995). It may be an error in association when one connects the words *technology* and *education* together to immediately think of the computer. A comprehensive definition of the word interconnects it with all aspects of the educational process. However, the computer, as an instructional, learning, and information-gathering and writing tool, does occupy a pivotal role in the educational world todaya role that is evolving as well as maturing over time.

For example, consider how the information age has challenged this English department chairperson to come up with a suitable strategy and policy for uncovering and confronting students who engage in a sophisticated form of plagiarism. This occurs when students decide to export and import into their documents entire passages gathered from the World Wide Web or a software reference program and submit the work as their own. It is troublesome, at the very least, in this technologically rich information age for teachers to locate the exact source of these suspicious data in order to

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substantiate the accusation. How frustrating it is to realize that perhaps the very "lure" of the medium in an atmosphere of technophilia has contributed somewhat to the frequency of this act. Without attempting to rationalize the ethical principles violated in such deeds, have students possibly come to believe that the information they gather does not require adaptation? Do they see themselves as passive rather than active participants, facing an illuminated screen containing formatted "perfection"? Are these same stu-dents equating the acquisition of information with possession, thereby sincerely believing that they can "name" this retrieved material their own?

Is the computer, therefore, a means of desensitizing ethical, academic standards? Certainly plagiarism has always been an issue in the educational arena. However, it may be proper to question whether our ethical standards have experienced some obscurity due to our immature perspective of technology. Is the computer a means of dehumanizing instruction? Whether the computer is employed as a resource or an instru - ment, it still requires teacher-student interaction. This was specifically true in the Writers Forum class described above. No one can convince me that any machine can verbally intera.: with students seeking to improve their writing skills, nor can it answer questions of phrasing, tone, and style along the way in the manner that a human facilitator can. On the other hand, some would argue that many traditional teacher-dominated instructional models were far more dehumanizing than the ones directed by machines (Hayden and Torkelson, 1973).

In the quest to achieve sound educational goals and objectives, mature and responsible educators need to use all of the technologies available to them. However, equally essential is their task to objectively review, evaluate, and revise the role of these technologies so as to assure their appropriate place in the educational process.

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Call for Manuscripts Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500-5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

February 1998 (deadline October 15,1997)
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Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Henry Kiernan, Editor, *English Leadership Quarterly*, West Morris Regional High School District, Administration Building, Four Bridges Road, Chester, NJ 07930; phone 908-879-6404, ext. 278; fax 908-8798861; e-mail hkwmreg@planet.net.

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Alternative Ways of Evaluating

by Henry Kiernan, editor

Expectations, competencies, and standards are the stuff of evaluation. Evaluation is a part of our understanding who we are by the process of assessing our strengths and weaknesses. It's unspeakably risky business, requiring a leap of faith in the evaluator's judgments and in our own ability to reflect critically. From benchmarks to rubrics, from clinical supervision to sitebased planning, from kindergarten progress reports to SAT scores, each of us is the process and product of evaluation. While some evaluation is self-inflicted, this issue will explore methods of evaluating that are thrust upon us, and what we can do to change the ways we measure and are measured.

With all the support for authentic assessment in the classroom (see Fred Newmann, et al., *English Leadership Quarterly*, May 1996, p. 2), it is amazing how little has changed in the traditional classroom teacher observation. Many department chairs and administrators continue to conduct formative teacher evaluations by spending 40 minutes in a classroom and rating a teacher's performance on variables that may define good teaching. Much of this is required by state regulations for accountability, but any teacher who has endured these "one-shot deals" knows how transitory these evaluative experiences can be.

Nancy Hennessy opens this issue with a fresh perspective about applying portfolios to professional development. She reminds us that teaching is also learning. Kathy Sanford, Mary Catherine Cole, and Don C. Pair focus on student learning and reinforce that students bring to us what we don't know, so we can learn it.

Editor's note: *During the publication of this issue, NCTE made several changes to the publication dates of its journals. Beginning in 1998, the* English Leadership Quarterly *will be published during the months of February, May, August, and October.*

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The Professional Development Portfolio: Thinking through Teacher Assessment

by Nancy Hennessy, West *Morris Regional High School District, Chester, New Jersey*

Current knowledge in the critical fields of learning theory, professional development, and assessment are providing the impetus for rethinking present philosophy and practices in the area of teacher assessment, specifically supervision/evaluation at the school system level. If the overall purpose of a supervision/evaluation system is professional improvement, it is essential to reflect on how the supervisory and evaluative aspects of the system contribute to the achievement of this goal. Supervision, by its very nature, is formative, while evaluation is summative. The search for the means to capture meaningful evidence of both teacher growth and competency continues. Traditional observations, checklists of competencies, rating scales, and narratives have typically been used to determine and express levels of competency and performance. In many instances, these same techniques, along with development of professional learning plans, have been used in the supervisory process to encourage growth. However, experts in the field of supervision/evaluation are encouraging us to reconsider current practices and to examine how we might integrate emerging trends and findings from supervision and related fields. The West Morris Regional High School District accepted this challenge in 1994 and embarked on a journey that required an exploration of beliefs, current thinking, and a willingness to change philosophy and practices regarding teacher assessment.

A review of the emerging knowledge base in the critical areas of teaching and learning, professional development, and assessment is necessary to understand the perspectives and actions of those who were involved in this process. Effective practice demands that we perceive teaching as a metacognitive act that involves informed reflective judgment (Pajak, 1993, p. 318), and that we offer opportunities for making sense of the teaching/learning process in the construction of meaning (Sparks, 1997, p. 5).

In other words, if an assessment system is to influence teacher performance in a positive sustainable way, then it must have professional development at its heart.

Additionally, we know that adult learners most often benefit from learning experiences that they have had a voice in selecting, that connect to their practice, and that allow opportunity for interaction with colleagues. We also are beginning to realize that assessment should demonstrate concern for process as well as product, and reflect a cognitive rather than a behavioral approach (Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters, 1992, p. 13). Finally, effective professional development provides a continuum of opportunities that encourage teacher growth; that is, a wide array of activities that match developmental needs and engage learners in experimenting, creating, and solving problems (Lieberman, 1995, p. 591). In other words, if an assessment system is to influence teacher performance in a positive sustainable way, then it must have

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists,supervisors,coordinators, and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

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professional development at its heart.

Our collective experience with the system we had been using, coupled with a reflection on current thinking, reinforced our belief that we were providing our professionals with limited opportunities for encouraging and demonstrating learning. We were approaching a point where we could better understand Carl Glickman's words, "Knowledge of how teachers can grow as competent adults is the guiding principle for supervisors in finding ways to return wisdom, power, and control to both individuals and the collective staff in order for them to become true professionals" (Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon, 1995, p. 102).

After a comprehensive review of literature, examination of other systems, and intensive discussions, the West Morris Regional High School District reached one of its many destinations with the completion of the revision of the supervision/ evaluation system in 1995. The new system was based in a belief that the purpose of supervision is to promote growth, improve the instructional process, and contribute to the academic achievement of students. In other words, assessment in a learning organization should reflect practices that directly promote learning for staff and students simultaneously. Cognizant of the need to create and support an environment that demanded competency while enhancing professional growth, the district adopted a system that is differentiated and provides a continuum of alternative activities that foster such essential practices as collaboration, reflection, and purposeful action. Tenured teachers have the opportunity to participate in experiences that support self-directed learning, including peer coaching, team teaching, classroom visitation, and a portfolio process. Nontenured teachers all engage in the portfolio process. We selected the Professional Development Portfolio, designed by Mary Dietz, as a model for structuring professional learning. It has proved to be one of the most powerful enriching experiences in our array.

The portfolio process was introduced to the district in 1995. Initially, all administrators, nontenured teachers, and approximately 20 tenured teachers piloted the implementation. Mary Dietz visited the district twice that year, once to train the portfolio pioneers in process, and once to participate in a final celebration and gather feedback on process and product. The staff developer also worked directly with participants during that year, facilitating the implementation. In 1996, we traveled further on our journey with the addition of new nontenured teachers and nontenured staff. The year-long process was facilitated by the staff developer.

Figure 1

PORTFOLIO ORGANIZERS

- Purpose
  - -Beliefs
- Focus
  - -Learning Priority
- Process
  - -Activities-Learning Plan
  - -Collections
  - -Artifacts/Evidences
  - -Collaborations-Portfolio
  - -Partners/Roundtables
- Outcomes
  - -Reflections
  - -Celebration

The Professional Development Portfolio differs significantly from the popular concept of portfolio. Unlike the presentation portfolio, which is generally a collection of an individual's accomplishments, this portfolio provides a structured process for individuals to focus learning that is directly related to practice. In fact, Mary Dietz defines the portfolio as "a framework for initiating, planning, and facilitating their professional development while building connections between their professional goals and those of the school" (Dietz, 1995, p. 41). One of the underlying assumptions of the model is that teachers learn when they are engaged in inquiry, are empowered to design a plan to achieve goals, are encouraged to question current beliefs and explore new fields while gaining knowledge, and, finally, are responsible for the outcomes of their learning.

The Professional Growth Portfolio is designed around four organizers: purpose, focus, process, and outcomes (see Figure 1). Each organizer represents a phase in the completion of the process. Activities during each phase guide the learner through the inquiry, and the organizer's activities are explained and discussed at planned meetings called roundtables. Throughout the year-long process, teachers collect artifacts and evidences of their learning. They meet collectively at scheduled roundtables and intermittently with selected portfolio partners to share concerns, progress, and insights. Participants also receive a structured journal that outlines and describes the process. There are scripted pages for record keeping and reflection. Our profes-

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sional portfolios take varied forms. Initially, each participant receives a binder including the journal, but they are encouraged to use what works. Our teachers have organized their collections of learning in canvas bags, tattered file folders, crates, and occasionally, slick binders. Our emphasis is portfolio as a process with the end product being learning rather than a "perfect presentation." The magic is in the personal journey.

We introduce portfolio participants to the overall process and, more specifically, the first two organizers (purpose/focus) at the initial roundtable, which is generally held in September. The discussion, at this point, focuses on beliefs regarding teaching, learning, and the purpose of the profession. Participants then reflect on their professional wants and needs, which ultimately assists them in identifying an area of inquiry directly related to their practice. This then becomes the learning priority or focus for professional growth. The district's "Descriptors of Good Teaching," which represent our professional standards, serves as the guide in the selection of this learning priority for nontenured teachers. They are asked to articulate the connection between their learning priority and these competencies throughout the process. Tenured staff, who have achieved proficiency in the standards, are asked to develop new or deeper expertise and often begin by reflecting on the professional needs of the teacher of the 21st century. Over the last two years, teachers have investigated such diverse and challenging topics as: combining current writing theory and personal

I know that to be effective as supervisors, we must embed continuous learning opportunities connected to practice within our school culture.

philosophy into an effective pedagogical approach, using the computer lab to enhance teaching of grammar and writing, increasing reading comprehension in a foreign language class, challenging students with varied ability levels in creative writing, incorporating and assessing cooperative approaches in science classes, and identifying multisensory approaches to teach American Literature.

In the third phase (process), participants clarify and refine their initial focus while developing learning plans that identify those activities that will facilitate learning. The learning plan is dynamic, and teachers often add or revise activities based on their current state of knowledge and progress on their professional journey. Our teachers have dialogued with colleagues; interviewed professors; attended workshops; read books and articles; researched pedagogy; developed, implemented and assessed lessons; experimented with technology; surfed the net; and presented workshops. Additionally, many have included activities such as peer coaching and classroom observation.

Among the most rewarding experiences of the process are the collegial exchanges. Teachers have limited opportunity to discuss their practice with their colleagues, yet we know that one of the most effective ways for teachers to learn is to talk with one another. After the initial roundtable, meetings are held throughout the school year. Teachers meet informally with their portfolio partners to share learning and extend understanding. Additionally, three to four roundtables are scheduled within the school day or after school during traditional meeting time. All portfolio participants engage in discussions of progress and use this opportunity to demonstrate learning through sharing artifacts and evidences that they have collected. Teachers are asked to discuss what they have learned to date, reflect on what else they want to know, and determine how they might answer remaining questions. For example, at one of our meetings, teachers were asked to respond to the question, "What have you been learning?" This is a sampling of their responses:

- I didn't realize that my colleagues from other disciplines could be such a rich source of information.
- My students are very receptive to new teaching styles; they become more actively involved in learning.
- My students respond positively to working with computers; they are more enthusiastic. It takes a great deal of creativity to design these lessons.
- I never really thought about how I write. Many of the absolute beliefs I had about writing have been shattered, and I am in the process of revisioning teaching writing.

These meetings also give participants opportunities to share videos, articles, lessons, and student work. We have also scheduled mid-year informal interviews with respective supervisors to create additional opportunities for self-assessment and feedback.

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The final phase or organizer focuses on outcomes. Teachers who initially identified their current levels of knowledge in a specific area, selected a relevant learning priority, participated in planned learning activities, and assessed learning and progress, now report an increased knowledge and understanding at the last roundtable. This final meeting, held in May, is a celebration of learning. Participants describe products, share observations and learning, and discuss the benefits of the portfolio process as well as the critical implementation factors and suggestions for modification. They respond to critical questions that require them to reflect on how the process influenced their professional work and impacted student learning. We ask teachers to describe how the process influenced professional work and student learning. Additionally, we consider insights gained regarding our own learning process as well as that of our students. The celebration also provides an opportunity for feedback on the process itself and the value of portfolio. Our teachers tell us that portfolio is a unique professional development opportunity, and their satisfaction is evident by increased participation. They also reinforce how meaningful this process is if professional growth is the principal goal of supervision/ evaluation. Teachers feel that the portfolio process provides a structured approach to learning, creates a vehicle for sharing ideas and working collaboratively, allows risk taking and experimentation with ideas related to subject matter, acknowledges the importance of reflecting on teacher and student learning, and has far greater value than traditional supervisory/evaluation methods. One teacher expressed the collective feeling of the group regarding its value in one word: growth. Perhaps most important of all, however, our professionals tell us that the process contributes to student achievement. The Professional Development Portfolio has also served as my primary vehicle for growth and reflec-tion. As the staff developer and the district professional ultimately responsible for implementation of the portfolio, I have had the opportunity to witness the excitement and energy generated by this process. It has also prompted me to consider what the next steps should be in growing and sustaining the process. I know that to be effective as supervisors, we must embed continuous learning opportunities connected to practice within our school culture. I also recognize the importance of collegial interactions. Up to this point, the learning priorities have been investigated individually. My efforts this year will be focused on involving teachers in group inquiry using the portfolio process to structure their learning. Each year, participants ask for additional scheduled time to meet. This is a formidable but not insurmountable roadblock. Perhaps even more challenging is the work that still remains to be done in changing the culture of the profession. Our mindset regarding supervision/evaluation and professional development is just beginning to change. One of my challenges will be to continue to promote and encourage increased participation in a year-long process focused on professional development. We need to arrive at a point where we all believe that the goal of teacher assessment is growth. .

While we do not think we have arrived at our final destination, we do believe that we have traveled much further than we originally imagined. The district is on the road to creating "an intellectual climate" for all of our learners. We are committed to thinking through teacher assessment and linking it to professional learning. As a learning organization, we will continue to seek out those practices that directly promote learning for students and staff. Carl Glickman tells us that one of our goals as supervisors should be "to return control to the teaching faculty to decide collective instructional improvements" (Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon, 1995, p. 102). The Professional Growth Portfolio has proved to be one effective and exciting vehicle for this journey.

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Alternative Approaches to Evaluation

by Kathy Sanford, University of Alberta, Edmonton

Seeking to Understand Evaluation

Throughout my years of classroom teaching, I have continually struggled with the evaluative aspects of "teaching" and the phenomenon of evaluation. I have been startled by its deceptive strength and power, been distressed as I witnessed its capture of unsuspecting victims, and become aware of the vastness of its web of connections. The sense of chaotic messiness I have felt about evaluation has taken on a distinct form in the intricacy and complexity of the web before me, elusive but powerful, connected to myriad other webs by further tightly woven strands. I have struggled with both ideas and practices that I have encountered and believed in, attempting to avoid the powerful grasp of evaluation. I returned to my teaching with many questions, questions that opened up gaps in which I could explore new possibilities: How could I change my evaluative practices to better relate to the other activities that develop in a classroom? How can a language develop for myself and my students that will create gaps in which understanding will grow? These questions have moved me to consider the words, methods, and beliefs that have created the structure of my teaching.

After a two-year research project, I returned to the classroom to teach junior high students, aware of the details of personality, of curriculum, and of individual desires. My questions became specific to the classroom context in which I located myself, and my search for alternative evaluative and teaching strategies became more focused. I challenged myself with the following questions:

What have you learned that will change your teaching/evaluating practices? How will you go about creating changes? Having seen some of the effects of imposed external evaluations on students, teachers, and learning, how can you use evaluation to support and extend learning, rather than to limit and stifle it? How could alternative practices of education and evaluation (radical pedagogies) be discussed and considered differently? How could we then change teaching practices as well as vocabularies of pedagogy?

The two roles assumed by a teacher that seem to clash most severely are the helping, caring role and the judging, correcting role. Students look to their teachers to give them guidance and support, to make suggestions and offer advice. They value the words and ideas of their teachers, they implement them into their writing and their thinking. They complete their assignments under the guidance of their teacher and hand them in to be evaluated by the same person that has just given them help. The teacher must then assume the role of judge while, at the same time, not really relinquishing the role of guide. Not only is there a confusion of roles for the teacher, there is also an emotional investment in both the student and the student's work. The evaluation becomes a tangle of emotions, suggestions, judgments, and corrections juxtaposed on the page, left for the student to decipher. As noted by Searle and Dillon (1980), teachers' responses to student work have focused largely on pointing out the errors found; specific reference to content has been a rare feature of teachers' responses.

In the banking model of education, as suggested by Freire (1968), the teacher never entirely relinquishes the role of judge. If a trusting relationship between teacher and student is an important aspect of learning, is it possible to seriously challenge the banking model of education as described by Freire? I have had cause to closely examine my own teaching practices as well as the practices of the teacher participants in my research study and have used Freire's model as a guide in my examination. Freire has suggested that the dominant approaches to education include the following:

a. the teacher teaches and the students are taught
b. the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing
c. the teacher thinks and the students are thought about
d. the teacher talks and the students listen-meekly
e. the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined
f. the teacher chooses and enforces his [sic] choice, and the students comply
g. the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher
h. the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it
i. the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students
j. the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are the mere objects. (p. 59)

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I considered each of these items of Freire's critique, and recognized them in both my own teaching and the teaching of others I had observednot every item, and certainly not all the time, but perhaps still too often. I recognized particularly a way of thinking about students, believing that they needed to be guided and shaped by my wisdom and background knowledge. The students had become the public property of a system that objectifies the students and their knowledge. I recall crafting lessons in which I was the leading actor, director, and set designer; the students were relegated to very minor dramatic roles and to the role of audience. I have observed many

How can education develop and improve the lives of students and of teachers? How can we create openings in which students can grow and develop? Who will decide how that development will happen, and what the improvements will be?

classes where the course content was selected solely by the teachers who reasoned that this material was necessary for the final exam. Students have had no choice but to comply with the teacher because the alternative was failure-of the assignment, the exam, or the course. The relationship between student and teacher as described by Freire's "banking education" is one of oppression, fear, and complacency, enforced through evaluative means that don't consider the future of students' learning, but rather judge the students' learning based on past performances. Teachers, in the students' understanding, hold the power, make the rules, and dictate the course of study. The teachers' understanding, however, encompasses the belief that the power is held by a higher authority yet, and the teachers are merely implementing curriculum and discipline policies that have been dictated to them. The responsibility for education, therefore, does not rest with the students, nor with the teachers, but with a higher unnamed, unrecognizable authority.

Challenging Ongoing Practices

Dominant ideologies, such as the banking model suggested by Freire, have structured education and created expectations that need to be challenged in our schools and in our classrooms. Teachers need to consider the spirituality of teaching, the lifelong effects of educational/evaluative practices in school. How can education develop and improve the lives of students and of teachers? How can we create openings in which students can grow and develop? Who will decide how that development will happen, and what the improvements will be?

I have taken these thoughts and questions with me into the classroom as I resumed teaching junior high school. With memories and suggestions of educational practices scrolling through my mind, I attempted to make changes to my own practices. Assisted by knowledge of the particular classroom situation and the students that would share my space for a year, I returned to the questions, "How can evaluation be used to support and extend learning?" and "How can alternative practices be considered differently for both teacher and students?" I have seen the terminology of educational practices change (e.g., *end-of-chapter questions* have become *extensions of learning; good copy* has become *final draft; binder* has become *portfolio),* seen different configurations of desks and students (e.g., rows have become circles or clusters), and seen materials adapt to modern times (e.g., young adult novels; CD-ROMs; multiple texts), but the underlying belief structures that plot an educational course have remained fixed and unconsidered. How can underlying understandings of education and evaluation be reconsidered *as well as* the language used to describe events and activities?

Examining My Own Assumptions

If there were to be changes to beliefs and power structures in my classroom, it would begin with changes to the understandings both my students and I brought to educational and evaluative situations. I realized that I needed to examine my underlying assumptions about teaching before I could reshape the nature of education with my students. "With my students" became an important phrase that anchored my thinking. I considered the aspects of education that I valued-expression of voice, existence of choice, opportunities for conversation, flexibility, unpredictability (through unrehearsed and spontaneous dialogue), and student "authority." I did not want to see my students shaping and manipulating their writing (and manipulating me) for good grades. I did not want choice to be artificial, controlled by the teacher. I wanted learning in the classroom to be collaborative, negotiated by those closest to learning, the students and the teacher. Yet as I listened to my thoughts, I found them directed by "I"-what "I" want, what "I" value. How is there room in a classroom for thirty "I"s? What kind of experiences would enable the expression of thirty genuine voices? What is my role as a teacher? I have sought to understand a liberating curriculum, one that enables expression for thirty voices, where dialogue, according to Freire, enables the

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teacher-as-Subject to become teacher-student and the student-as-Object to become studentteacher, thus decentering both teachers and students from their traditional roles. Daignault (1989) describes curriculum as a "gap," and he thinks of the gap as the "incarnation of curriculum

I wanted the power structures in the classroom to be reconfigured, to acknowledge the vitality of spirit in learning, and to consider issues of gender/race/class as they imposed frameworks upon learning.

as composition." "Curriculum as thinking," Daignault suggests, "is always moving, diversifying . . . is 'nomadic' . . . . curriculum does not exist, it happens" (p. 479). This understanding of curriculum allows gaps to exist that enable openings for all learners. Doll (1993) also acknowledges gaps and suggests that a reintegration of the subject and object (initiated by Descartes' mind-body split) could change curriculum's focus to "dialoguing, negotiating, interacting." These words suggest indeterminacy, openness, and self-organization. They are, Doll says, "words of a transformative curriculum . . . focusing on the process of . . . negotiating with self and others" (p. 86). With these desires, hopes, and concerns for new understandings of curriculum, I began to restructure my teaching practice. At the completion of my two-year research project, I needed to go beyond suggesting problems and alternatives. I needed to know if there were *possible* alternatives to the practices I was critiquing, or if the alternatives existed only in a nonexistent ideal world, in books, and in my head. I was not satisfied with the theoretical writings that suggested alternatives to "thoughtless" teaching practice (Gilbert, 1989, p. 37), practice that could be improved by attending to the words of theoreticians. I was suspicious of theories presented outside of the context of a classroom. I had been, after all, a classroom teacher for 15 years and had implemented many of the practices I was now critiquing. I did not want merely to change roles and become a theoretician suggesting "better" practices rather than a practitioner. I needed to find ways to meld the two roles, so that I could genuinely examine and reshape my own teaching practices in light of my changing beliefs and values.

My beliefs became reconstructed as I considered issues of evaluation from various angles and perspectives. I was particularly concerned with evaluation used for ranking purposes, evaluation that provided information for student reports, evaluation that does not relate to students' learning. Virtually all evaluation ranks students, I realized through my observations and discussions with teachers. Despite the rhetoric about the purposes of evaluation (correcting errors, reinforcing previous teaching, giving feedback), the main information desired by teachers and students was the ranking position of individuals within the system being scrutinized. I wanted to attempt evaluative approaches that focused elsewhere, that extended the learning processes rather than merely judging them. I wanted the power structures in the classroom to be reconfigured, to acknowledge the vitality of spirit in learning, and to consider issues of gender/race/class as they imposed frameworks upon learning.

Evaluation Brought to Life

I began my teaching year in a newly developed program, one that afforded me opportunities to structure alternative teaching and evaluating strategies. As I began a new teaching assignment, I looked for ways to communicate with my students about their learning development in ways that were individualistic, positive, supportive, and valued by the students, the administrators in the system, and the parents. I realized that there would be skepticism on the part of these interest groups as I changed the traditional "marking" system

My focus was on enabling students to make choices and expressing themselves through journals. In previous teaching experiences, I had used journals in a variety of forms, and offered choices to the students. I had, through these experiences, become aware of the possibilities and dangers of perpetuating traditional teacher/student relationships despite attempts to the contrary. Students, eager to determine "what the teacher wanted" would manipulate their own journal entries to please the teacher, and make choices that assured them success in the assignments rather than pleasure or growth (SanfordSmith, 1994). Discussion of student writing or the contents of student portfolios, "conferencing" as it became known, offered opportunities for students to express their opinions and ask questions about their work. These too, however, became platforms for students to request high marks and for teachers to explain (defend) their assigned marks. Continuing to implement these strategies in the classroom was clearly not enough.

Rather than simply discarding the approaches I had been attempting to develop in my classrooms (reading and writing workshops, conferences, portfolios, dialogue journals), I had to reconceive learning through the eyes of the students and through my own eyes. Instead of finding ways to "motivate" my students

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with interesting assignments and the promise of rewards, I needed to find ways for them to develop their own voices without fear of sanction and to find ways for me to hear what they were saying. My search for alternative ways of considering evaluation opened up new vistas for me to explore with my students, vistas that encompassed attributes of "feminist" pedagogy: valuing multiple perspectives, individual voice, choice, selfacknowledgment, self-expression, and reflexivity (Allen, 1996).

Broadening the Vistas

Despite the attempts to "allow," students to express their views, make choices, take risks, explore alternative styles, it became apparent to me that the teacher still held the ultimate power to declare the students' efforts successful or failed, to open doors for future development or to close them soundly. How, then, would I be able to change the evaluation system so that students had voice in this aspect of learning as well? How would we redistribute the power held in the classroom? How would I know if changes were taking place in the classroom?

Teacher-determined evaluation generally keeps the students dependent on an "other" in order for them to develop an understanding of their progress; students rely on teacherassigned grades to determine their success. They cannot determine for themselves how well they have accomplished a task because they have never had the opportunity. Students do not have the vocabulary to discuss their own performances; they do not have the understanding that a piece of writing can become separate from the person creating the writing. Rarely have teachers modeled self-assessment in the classroom; therefore, students do not have a concept of how to talk about or to feel about assessing their own work.

As the students and I developed a learning community in the classroom we needed to develop a vocabulary that enabled us to talk together in a variety of evaluative ways to continue the creating and learning processes. I began the year with an approach to evaluation that eliminated specific grades or marks. Rather, I introduced the students to three terms that would be descriptive of their work: "incomplete," "acceptable," and "superior." I attempted to use these words in discussions of the students' work, indicating where the work was incomplete, how incomplete work was different from acceptable work, and what attributes made a piece of work superior. I developed assessment guides such as the ones shown in Figures 1 and 2 that focused the students on specific attributes of their work, attempting to help them read and evaluate their work better. The assessment forms asked the students to consider the level of the writing being assessed (incomplete, acceptable, superior) and to give specific examples that supported their assessment.I struggled throughout the year with establishing credibility with my students-not as a teacher, but as a learner. I asked myself, "How should I present myself in order to create a level of genuine trust? What will enable us to break down barriers of authority and self-preservation so that we may grow together?" By revealing myself as human, showing my frailties, my passions, and my thoughts over several months, I was able (to some extent) to establish my trust-worthiness. These attitudes were revealed through conversations that occurred randomly and spontaneously during classes, at lunch, on the way to field trips. As I was able to become more human in the students' eyes, they revealed to me some of their thoughts, which allowed for mutual understandings about learning. This opening-up through conversation gave importance to dialogues; students developed sincerity in listening to advice as well as giving it. The students were able to offer advice to their colleagues and to me that was genuine and well-intended: "You need to write longer responses. Don't summarize as much." "I think your work is good, but it needs to be more carefully proofread." "There are too many spelling mistakes." "Your story is confusing and your sentences are choppy."

Figure 1. Self-assessment sample.

Grade 8 Humanities
Poster Evaluation
HISTORICAL FICTION

Student Evaluation

Comments_____

_____

_____

Visual Clarity	Superior	Acceptable	Incomplete
Relevant Information	Superior	Acceptable	Incomplete
Creative/Unique Pres.	Superior	Acceptable	Incomplete
Neatness	Superior	Acceptable	Incomplete

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Figure 2. Peer assessment sample.

Project Presentation
Assessment

Name_____ Title of Project_____

Partner's names _____

Assessment of my own presentation _____

The most effective presentation was _____

Describe this presentation_____

The strengths of this presentation_____

One aspect of the classroom routine that continued to bother me throughout the year was the practice of "conferencing" with the students. Although the intents of conferencing about student writing and assignments are valid (to give students opportunities to talk about their intentions, to get feedback from genuine readers, and to consider possibilities for further writing), often "conferences" become yet another forum for teachers to make suggestions or offer criticism and explanations for the evaluations they have deemed appropriate. There is usually a time restriction on these conferences that limits the amount of talk that can take place, and a specific agenda defined by the teacher that limits the type of talk that can take place. Conferences as I had structured them in previous classes were teacher-controlled, allowing the students to have an opportunity to hear feedback from the teacher and to defend their writing. They perpetuated, however, the power relations that had traditionally been defined by the educational system, with teacher firmly positioned as authority in the classroom. My attempts to restructure the power relations in the classroom were not being supported by conferencing. I needed to find ways of talking with the students that enabled a different understanding of the purpose of talking about their writing. I attempted to broaden the alternatives for conferencing by enabling the students to have more openings in the conversations.

I completed my "teacher assessment" of the students' writing based on the same focus and the same criteria as the one the students were using to assess their own work. I added my assessment of the students' work after the students' self-assessment was completed in the hopes that I could avoid influencing the students' assessment of their own work.

I came to recognize that the role of outside observer (researcher) was very similar to that of the teacher. The researcher continually observes the teachers, the teacher continually observes the students. Each observer selects a meaning that fits into her/ his personal evaluative framework or intent, creating judgments based on what has been "seen" or created. It is often difficult to "see" from perspectives other than our own, so we need collaborative conversations to obtain more complete views of the work being offered for assessment.

After several different opportunities for self-assessment, I asked the students to assess the work of a peer as well as their own work. My goal was to help the students develop a broader understanding of "acceptable" work or "superior" work by having them read the work of other students. After considering the work of their peers, they could view their own work with new eyes. As the students continued with self- and peer assessments, I was able to see the differences between the two types. Although students became very adept at using our common vocabulary and giving examples and suggestions, they were unable to "see" with the same depth of understanding when they viewed their own work. They shaped the vocabulary to justify their work rather than to examine it critically; it was very difficult for them to view their own work objectively. They felt they were examining not only their writing but themselves in their entirety. I found my own comments assessing the students' work more closely resembling the peer assessments than the selfassessments.

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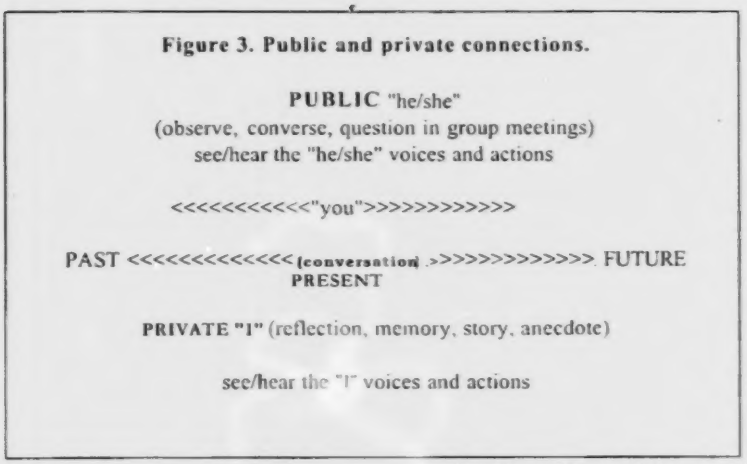
Figure 3. Public and private connections.



As the year progressed, the students' conversations dealt more with the content of the writing and less with comparisons between students' ranking. However, it was still very difficult for them to distinguish their writing from their "selves." As one teacher in the high school had commented, "The way we write is an expression of ourselves, it's coming out of us. It's incredibly risky to hand over a piece of writing to be examined for its weaknesses."

I continued to assess the students' writing throughout the year, interspersing my teacher assessments with students' peer and self-assessments. I was able to model some of the possible responses to students' work, showing them alternative aspects to consider. Modeled responses moved the students away from standard superficial comments about their own and others' writing, such as "good effort," "I liked the story," and (about their own writing) "I worked really hard on this story,"to more specific and lengthy comments, such as: "You should try making predictions and talking about the characters in depth." "You might enjoy a more challenging book you could try *The Giver* by Lois Lowry." "Could you rewrite the first sentence? It doesn't seem very clear to me." I was always wary, however, of how much I was leading the students to "give me what I wanted." Through my own comments, I did not want to suggest that these were the types of responses that would please me, butrather that they were possibilities toconsider. However, the studentssometimes panicked about "how well they were doing" and wanted to findways to show me they were doing well. Although I wanted to point out incorrect structures and usages, I did not want to paralyze the students with a continual search for "correctness." I also did not want them to rely on me for the answers; rather, I wanted them to learn ways to examine their own work. The impulses to tell the students what to do were strong-remained strong-as they have been ingrained in my teaching practice. I struggled to learn alternative approaches to discussing and assessing students' work. Teacher-determined assessment is efficient, and I have continually struggled with my desire to complete work quickly, to control the assessment myself, and to get on to a new activity. I have had to reassess and revalue the activities that occur in a classroom and the time that is spent on them. At the beginning of the year I was instrumental in introducing activities, providing structure, and a time frame. As the year progressed, the students' voices joined in the planning, as they suggested alternative activities, requested different time frames, and created new approaches. Our roles changed; the activities became more collaborative and negotiated. Throughout the year, we maintained a self-selected reading program and a dialogue journal that provided a record of the students' thoughts and development. We maintained portfolios of the students'

However, as I had come to recognize with my students, self assessment is the most demanding challenge of evaluation and of education.

completed work, although we soon found that the portfolios were limiting and did not accommodate large wall maps, paintings, dioramas, or sculptures. After three months, we also began a workshop approach to writing that continued to the end of the year, culminating in a class anthology. We completed the bulk of our learning as "projects," both in groups and individually. The consideration of time lessened as I saw the students' work becoming more complex and integrative. Each activity encompassed meaningful and varied learning. The work continued to be assessed, by myself and the students, using the three descriptors incomplete, acceptable, and superior. However, as I had come to recognize with my students, self-assessment is the most demanding challenge of evaluation and of education. Since my teaching lessons are reflective of me as a person, the same challenge applied to me. How do I know what issues of power and communication shape students' learning in ways I am unable to see? Is it possible to make connections between public and private ideas, to place the students

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and teacher all as Subjects within the learning environment, and to consider future directions as well as past histories in the present moment?

As I myself became immersed in the culture of the classrooms I was teaching, the public classroom performances I had understood through observation, conversation, and questioning began to connect with the private understandings (through reflection, memory, story, anecdote) of classrooms that I held. The questions that began to present themselves to me related not only to past and present experiences, but directed me to look ahead to future experiences. The assumptions I had taken to my classrooms were brought to light for examination. The third person "she/he" positioning of the participants of my research (see Figure 3) began to blur with the first person "I" positioning I held for myself. The distinctions between positions shifted through conversations, and as the elusive signifier "you" took on more meanings and encompassed more positions, I was less able to distinguish a unique and separate position for myself. The signifier "you" positioned in Figure 3 slides along the continuum between past and future, and as easily slides between private and public, creating interruptions to previously assumed understandings. Its referent shifts at the caprice of the speaker, at the whim of the listener.

Through an alternative understanding of assessments, my students and I attempted to acknowledge openly the important force of evaluation and to redefine this forceful power source in positive terms. We have, through collaboration and conversation, discovered power from within and around us, recognizing "self" and "other" as well as the "other" of "self." Discourse enables multiple voices to exist simultaneously. The acknowledgment of multiple versions of self has opened spaces in which many voices might sound. Through reversing binaries, privileging what has previously not been privileged, and enabling students to self-assess their processes and their products, we are able to acknowledge the "value" of all students.

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Using the Process Approach to Improve Preservice Students' Attitudes toward Writing

by Mary Catherine Cole, West Side Elementary School, West Point, Mississippi

By the time my preservice students have reached college, many are afraid of writing, and hate the thought of having to do so. They are even more apprehensive about having to teach writing in the classroom. Negative attitudes toward writing are not easy to change, but it can be done. The method that I have found most effective not only helps students improve their own attitudes toward writing, but also prepares them to teach writing in the classroom.

College students enjoy classes where they are actively involved in the learning process. Therefore, instead of lecturing to my classes, I use an assortment of strategies and activities that require them to do something. The writing activity I use models the process approach to writing, with the emphasis on the first three steps (prewriting, drafting, revising). The students not only learn how to write and to teach writing, but they have a good time doing so and learn about each other.

The class schedule in the External Degree Program at the State University of West Georgia is different from most. Our courses meet only once a week. Thus, my 5-quarter-hour language arts

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course meets for three and a half hours once a week. I have found that it only takes one class meeting to perform a "miracle"-the students learn that writing can be fun.

Whenever I announce that next week's class will be on teaching young children to write, my students mostly respond with long faces and heavy sighs. Most of them simply don't like to write! The usual excuses are that they can never think of anything to say, or do not know how to start. I assure them that they will like what we are going to do, and that they will learn a lot about each other in the process.

I ask each student to prepare for the next class by choosing a tangible object that is very meaningful to them. The only restriction is that it be small enough to carry (this eliminates those things that stand on hooves or wheels). The "meaningful" test is simple: If your house were on fire and only one thing could be saved, what would that thing be. I ask them to bring that object to the next class, and to be prepared to give a short talk about the object, and why it is so special to them. I tease and challenge them by telling them that I will bring and explain an object that is special to me.

I explain that trust takes time with young children, and we have to work on this in many ways long before we even start the process of writing.

The students arrive for the "big week" with all sorts of things, such as pictures, rings, stuffed animals, pillows and blankets. As the students come into class, they are looking at the different things the others have brought. They say "What did you bring? When did you get that? That's interesting!"

The hardest part of this class is getting everyone calmed down and in their places. I tell them that I will select one of them to tell their story. Unlike most class presentations, I have no trouble getting volunteers. All are excited about sharing their objects.

The selected student is so excited and stimulated by the class enthusiasm that the story gushes out. He quickly feels at ease because he is talking about something important to him. He doesn't realize that he is telling a story, and at the same time revealing things about himself that make the stories unique and interesting. After the presentation, the class enthusiastically asks questions. These questions show how the story conveys feelings and opens personalities. They also make each student think, or rethink, how he would tell his story. When the student has finished, I share my object. The students are allowed to ask questions, just as before. This really gets their attention because it shows a side of a faculty member that they rarely get to see.

Next, I have the class explore words and phrases that I might use to start my story. As a group, we find words and phrases that would start the story smoothly, as well as those that would not work. One student acts as recorder, and writes these words and phrases on the board. We next use the words and phrases to make sentences that might be good beginning sentences. Again the recorder writes these sentences on the board. Once this is completed, I show the students how I can take these suggestions and begin my story. This helps the students overcome one major problem: how to begin.

Now the students form groups of three or four and repeat the process with their own stories. At this point, they are very excited about sharing with each other. They really enjoy helping each other think up clever beginnings for the stories. This is a noisy activity because of the excitement and involvement of each student.

The students then begin to write the first drafts of their papers. At first, there is a hum of conversation as opening sentences are refined. But the room begins to grow quiet as each student becomes involved in writing. From the looks on the students' faces, they are really absorbed and very excited. No one at this point looks unhappy or anxious.

The next step is perhaps the most important in the whole process because it involves establishing trust. Each student has "opened up" in the initial telling of his story. Now comes the time to review the results, and to look for ways of helping each other revise and improve these results.

We reconvene as a class to discuss ways to offer constructive criticism without hurting each other's feelings. We discuss why it is important to know the proper way to make suggestions, and how to learn to accept honest criticism. We see that giving and receiving criticism requires trust, and how trust can be destroyed when we criticize carelessly. I explain that trust takes time with young children, and we have to work on this in many ways long before we even start the process of writing.

As part of my preparation for this class, I write a "story" about the object that I brought to class. I try to include in my story examples of "good" and "bad" writing (sometimes, what I think is "good" is thought "bad" by the class, and vice versa!). This is my "rough" draft.

I ask for four volunteers to help me improve my story. We sit at a table to model the procedure for the rest of the class, and I read my

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story to the four people who make up my "writing team." When I have finished, they ask me questions about points in the story that appear unclear. They can ask questions on why I chose to put something in the story and why I left something else out. I take notes so I don't forget the ideas that are being given.

I treat all of their questions as valid points. I usually accept their suggestions, and if not, I explain why. I make a show of thanking them if they suggest or point out something that had not occurred to me. I demonstrate "trust" in their criticism in return for their honest opinions. The students love this part. They love the feeling that we are working on my story and they have suggestions and ideas that would help me.

The class now breaks up into small groups. The "writing teams" go through the same process they have just watched. They are very excited about hearing each others' stories and making suggestions. As they are reading and asking questions, I walk around and monitor, sometimes asking them questions. If I see problems developing, I note them for later discussions with the class.

After the "writing team" critiques, the students start revising their stories. In about 30 minutes they are back together reading the revisions to each other. Initially, I did not include this as part of my strategy, but I have found it important and unavoidable.

We reassemble as a class, and I ask for volunteers to share their stories with the whole class. Everyone is excited about what they have written and want to share it. I always get more volunteers than time permits. Invariably, these include the students who the week before were dreading this class.

I conclude this part of the lesson by telling the students that they have just learned to overcome the biggest obstacle to writing-fear. Once they have mastered the fear within themselves, they are prepared to help young children overcome this same fear.

I wrap up our writing lesson by discussing ways that the classroom teacher can follow up this activity with young children. For example,

I describe how the children's stories could be kept in working portfolios, and the children should be encouraged to work on them whenever they want. Children with artistic abilities could illustrate their stories and help others illustrate theirs.

I then convey that pride and recognition are a very important part of learning. We talk about the many ways a teacher could "publish" student work. I first ask the class to look at collective

The students love this part. They love the feeling that we are working on my story and they have suggestions and ideas that would help me.

ways of displaying the stories. Putting stories on the bulletin board is usually the first thing mentioned. Other methods include a newsletter to parents and class books. We finish by looking at ways to personalize the child's accomplishment, such as by collecting the child's stories and binding them in a hardback cover.

We also talk about conferencing with individual students concerning their writing. I cover how to schedule conferences, things to include in conferences, and what to do with students who have a hard time expressing themselves. Through the experience of the lesson just completed, my students learned that intent and perception of criticism may be two different things, and that feelings and trust are an important part of effective criticism.

My students thoroughly enjoy this writing lesson activity, and the time passes quickly. For many, this has been their first positive experience in writing. Many have commented that it has taught them a lot about themselves and their classmates. For example, I have had students who wanted their stories read, but could not do so themselves. They were proud of their writing and wanted to share their thoughts and feelings with others, but they felt that they could not read their own stories without crying. They felt comfortable enough to have someone else read their stories for them, thus trusting another student with their stories and feelings.

This reaction is especially interesting because the students in our program are a cohort group. They start together in a tightly-planned program, and stay together for two years. It is not long before each student knows the others personally as well as professionally. This lesson seems to strengthen the bonds between members of the class, and helps shape lasting relationships.

I have found that students of all ages learn best when they actively participate. I have also found that teachers teach best when they enjoy what they are teaching. The process approach to writing is not only an effective method for teaching writing, but makes for better teaching because, sometimes, even the teacher is anxious about writing.

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Breakfast Club: Students Come Hungry to Learn

by Don C. Pair, Harlingen High School, Harlingen, Texas

"Do we have Breakfast Club tomorrow?" Marcos asked.

"You haven't got a teachers' meeting, have you?"

"Yeah, we want to talk about *Macbeth,*" Joe added.

Imagine yourself in my place-a teacher whose students, sorely afflicted with "senioritis," ask to come to class early to talk about English literature. Shakespeare, no less. It is a heady experience, but there is a reason for their enthusiasm. Those seniors who tried it found their test scores rose between 15 percent and 40 percent when they participated in the test review held before school. Students who would not think of doing anything outside the classroom suddenly discover the importance of reading. They don't do it because it is the assignment; they do it because it is the price they recognize and an outcome they desire.

All teachers in our school are required to be available to the students at least twice a week before or after school, but merely soliciting students to attend a tutoring session was a waste of time-I was there, but the students seldom showed up. Then one day when several students expressed concerns about a test, I invited them to bring a breakfast to the room and to ask questions about their assignment. Eight showed up with questions, and it was not difficult to lead them into a discussion. The eight did well on the test, and they decided they wanted a "Breakfast Club" before the remaining tests. That name, Breakfast Club, was given by my senior students. Something so simple as a name made them part of a club instead of students in need of tutoring.

After the in-class review, after they have studied the night before a test, and after writing an analytical question, students feel more prepared. The discussion shows that they are grasping the material, or that more instruction is needed. Working with the small group shows me what the larger group might also be missing.

Breakfast Club works because it is a student-driven environment where they read the material, the only time some will really read it, and then they formulate a question using Bloom's Taxonomy of higher order thinking. The students are not allowed to participate unless they have prepared a question for the group discussion. In the free exchange of Breakfast Club, where all students are prepared and motivated, the questions are more analytical, more focused, better conceived, and provide a springboard for discussion. Each student asks his or her question, and in many cases, I merely rephrase the question, and give it back to them to answer. Most of the time, with minimum help, they find the answer. When shown context clues, they canbegin the synthesis process, using pertinent data to explain what was a mystery to them just moments before.

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The time spent at Breakfast Club is short. It begins when the first student arrives at about 7:50 a.m., and continues until the first bell at 8:20. Each student has a question, so they make the rules and enforce them. They keep the group's attention focused, stop disruptive behavior, make sure the questions are specific, and see that none of *their* time is wasted. It is *their* class, *their* time, and *their* rules for the test review.

Breakfast Club is a win-win situation. Students get in-depth review on test day, and I get to work with students who choose to learn English literature. My class apparently thinks homework is the last resort of the social leper, so getting them to read before a test is an achievement. Some may study, but those who merely read the material represent a victory because they have questions whereas, before doing the reading, they had no interest. That little bit of preparation they have done leaves me free to do what I like-facilitate, helping them to harness the latent power in their minds. They become active learners instead of passive pupils just trying to serve their class time.

This smaller class of four to fifteen students, complete with their snacks, is both non-threatening and exciting because learning is taking place in a congenial atmosphere. I am rewarded by seeing the physical evidence of knowledge acquisition. A perceptible change occurs as a student mentally rehearses an answer, getting ready to perform it.

The recital begins slowly, picking up speed as it progresses. The body straightens and a smile begins to dawn, tentatively at first, then with increasing radiance. Finally, with the answer spoken, and my return smile accompanied by praise, a visible change I call a "self-esteem rush" happens and the student's whole countenance shouts, "Hey, I know this, and I'm ready for your test."

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1997 CEL Election Results

At its annual meeting during the NCTE Annual Convention, held this year in Detroit, the Conference on English Leadership elected two new Members -at-Large: Nina E. Bono, Signal Hill School, Belleville, Illinois, and Rosalie Rafter, Westbury Public Schools, New York. Both individuals will serve three-year terms.

In other business, Kathleen Strickland, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, was named Program Chair for the 1999 CEL conference, to be held in Denver, Colorado. George B. Shae Jr. of Belleville West High School, Illinois, was named as Liaison to the Conference on English Education, and Deborah Smith McCullar of Dean Morgan Junior High, Casper, Wyoming, will serve as Liaison to the NCTE Secondary Section Committee.

"Best Article" Winner Announced

Lynn Langer Meeks was honored at the November CEL meeting in Detroit as the recipient of the Conference on English Leadership's "Best Article" award for items published in the *English Leadership Quarterly* during 1996. Henry Kiernan, editor of the *Quarterly,* presented the author with a plaque during the CEL Luncheon.

The award honors the author of the best article, so chosen because of its value to the department chair, the quality of its writing, and its original ity. Meeks, who teaches at Utah State University, captures the issues and events for teachers and students implementing and adapting technology to the curriculum. In "When Worldviews Collide: The Curriculum Explodes" published in the December 1996 *Quarterly,* she wrote, "We need to be sensitive to the worldviews of all the cultural and religious groups in our communities."

Honorable mention went to finalsts for the award: Fred M. Newman, Helen M. Marks, Adam Gamoran, and Leon Lynn for "Intellectual Standards for Active Learning: Effects of Authentic Pedagogy on Student Performance" and Rick Chambers for "Signature Projects: Practical Applications of Skills to End the School Year."

The judging committee included Tohru Inoue, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Diane S. Isaacs, Ignatius College, Bronx, New York; Pat Monahan, South High School, Downers Grove, Illinois; and Barbara Thompson, Hazelwood School District, Florissant, Missouri.

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New Book Suggests Alternatives to Grading Writing

How can teachers evaluate student writing in ways that are theoretically and pedagogically sound, fair, and constructive? In 1994, the NCTE Committee on Alternatives to Grading Student Writing was charged with investigating that question by the NCTE Executive Committee. Under the leadership of professor Stephen Tchudi, the committee organized the results of their inquiry in *Alternatives to Grading Student Writing*, recently published by NCTE.

While members of the committee believe that grading writing does not contribute to the learning of writing, and while they would like to see the practice of grading disappear completely, they realize that this is unlikely to happen within current institutional constraints. They therefore made it their mission to give teachers who must work with grading systems genuine alternatives.

The book begins with a review of what research reveals about grades: namely, that they provide students with false motivation and a false indication of worth, lead to superficial learning, create barriers between students and teachers, and limit teachers' creativity. Part two is devoted to response strategies, which committee members believe provide the greatest range of freedom to teachers and student writers. Essays in the third part of the book address such practical alternatives to grading student writing as the use of pass/fail systems, assessment conferences, multidimensional scoring, and portfolios. The final part of the book provides outlines for faculty workshops in alternatives to grading student writing. Topics of the workshops include developing intrinsic motivation for students' writing, contract grading, and communicating with parents and the public about alternative assessment systems.

Readers will find dispersed throughout the book short "interludes" in which department heads, college composition teachers and teacher educators, and K-12 classroom teachers from around the country share their frustrations with grading and the ways in which they've triumphed over the limitations.

Alternatives to Grading Student Writing is available from NCTE. Stock no. 01305-0015; $22.95 for nonmembers, $16.95 for NCTE members.

Call for Manuscripts Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500-5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

May 1998 (deadline January 30, 1998)
Dimensions of Leadership

August 1998 (deadline March 15, 1998)
Problem-Based Learning

October 1998 (deadline June 15, 1998)
Mentoring and Developing Future Leaders

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Henry Kiernan, Editor, *English Leadership Quarterly*, West Morris Regional High School District, Administration Building, Four Bridges Road, Chester, NJ 07930; phone 908-879-6404, ext. 278; fax 908-8798861; e-mail kiernan@nac.net.

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New Directions: Leading the Way

by Henry Kiernan, editor

John Kotter, the esteemed Harvard Business School professor, was quoted in a *Fortune* article some time ago as saying, "Leaders are born and then made." In other words, he said we are given certain equipment at birth, but this potential must be drawn forth and refined through our experiences. A more recent article in the same magazine, however, says that "95% of managers know the right thing to say, but only 5% do it." What this suggests is that managers know how to be leaders but mostly fail to act as such. In fact, Kotter suggests that the potential for leadership does exist within all (or nearly all) of us. Yet most of us fail to actualize this. In the process of questioning this discrepancy, it sometimes seems as if Kotter's initial statement might better read: "Leaders are born, and then unmade!"

What our authors in this issue demonstrate is that leadership is not a technique or a patterned set of responses. It is a commitment to being oneself, caring about one's profession, and being willing to step out and do things differently in the best interests of the group or the organization. None of this is new. In many ways, this is obvious. Yet it is difficult for us as adults to travel from the convoluted, complicated places in which we spend much of our time to that which is simpler, more direct, and more immediately related to the welfare of the larger group of which we are a part. It is difficult for most of us to go beneath the surface and own up to the fact that we are, in fact, responsible for the organizations in which we live, that we are authorities within our own spheres, that no one else has the answers, and that no one else is in charge of our lives.

When we know inside ourselves that we each can "write our own ticket" within the context of our commitments, our hopes and dreams, then we have grown into the world of leadership. If I don't like the way something is going, what have I done about it? If our group is ineffective, did I tell them? Moreover, how did I do this? Did we share with others our own dissatisfaction and work with them to seek a better way? On every level, leaders act to seek new directions so as to take charge of their lives and, consequently, to improve the circumstances of the overlapping groups of which they are a part.

Yes, there is a degree of uncertainty in leading the way. But for those who will create the new rules, set down the new guidelines, and plot a new course, the road is open to us all. ●

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Editor's note: *During the publication of this issue, NCTE made several changes to the publication dates of its journals. Beginning in 1998, the* English Leadership Quarterly *will be published during the months of February, April, August, and October.*

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Talking about Our Talk: An Alternative Sociological Perspective

by Jane Lord, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pennsylvania

> *The overriding question facing us as a professional organization is: What do you do when the tide seems to be running against you?*
>
> Lester Faigley, "Literacy After the Revolution"

In "Shakespeare vs. Spiderman," John Leo invites the public to join him in throwing mudpies at the National Council of Teachers of English. Assailing the NCTE/IRA publication *Standards for the English Language Arts*, Leo picks up on the "mind-bending jargon" to incite suspicion of "word identification strategies," "writing process elements," "critical thinking," and "divergent views." Leo sends an important message to educators when he says, "The good news is that publication of the English standards is exposing this awful stuff to a broad public for the first time" (p. 61). He is telling us that we need to talk—and that we need to talk about our talk. We need a fresh perspective on the public discourse; we need a frame that affords distance yet draws us down toward practical strategies.

I propose that we meet Mr. Leo in the conversational marketplace. Looking at public discourse on language education through the frame of rational choice theory, we focus our attention on each party's particular interests, on what people want and on what they value. When people trade ideas in the marketplace, they calculate the personal costs and benefits of buying into an idea. Consumers do not judge the vendor as right or wrong; they only decide whether an item is worth the price. Thus, focusing on rational choices pushes ideologies to the edge. Viewing arguments about language and literacy as economic negotiations allows us to set aside James Berlin's premise that we can only argue *about* ideology *from* ideology—for the moment.

While such an alien reconceptualization of humanistic arguments may be less than appealing to language teachers, exercising multiple perspectives gives us access to the public conversation. Conversely, remaining centered on conflicting ideologies shuts us out of the conversation. As Jacqueline Jones Royster points out,

> We have not been conscientious about keeping lines of communication open, and we are now experiencing the consequences of talking primarily to ourselves as we watch funds being cut, programs being eliminated, and national agencies that are vital to our interests being bandied about. (p. 39)

Merely restating the premises of our professional conversations to the popular press pushes us further from, rather than closer to, possibilities for negotiation. Because we quite naturally extend our ideologies into our public arguments, it is not at all surprising that Lester Faigley says, "[The vision of literacy for participation in democratic community life, civic engagement, and social justice . . . feels like swimming against the current" (p. 34). To pull out of the current, we need to swim sideways. Paddling to the side is not to bolt to the *other* side, but the sideways move affords a different perspective on the forces at play in the mainstream.

Moving toward a rational choice perspective positions us in the conversational marketplace: this paper (1) offers a rationale for choosing a rational choice perspective, (2) distinguishes rational choice theory from the ideal of rational discourse, (3) applies Randall Collins's particular brand of rational choice theory to the dynamics of public discourse on language education issues, and (4) provides a few free samples of strategies designed to appeal to consumers.

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists, supervisors, coordinators, and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy where such endorsement is clearly specified.

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Rational Choice Theory as a Rational Choice

While language teachers might be more attuned to conflict and critical theories, these approaches are so packed with ideology that they are bound to skew our vision and, thus, to limit our understanding of public discourse on language issues. Explanations of public discourse that center on conflict tend to bog down in power struggles and to put us at risk for reducing action to power plays. In an arena of power, where administrators, politicians, and corporate leaders vie for control, writing teachers hardly stand a chance. As the various contributors to Richard H. Bullock and John Trimbur's *The Politics of Writing Instruction* testify, composition teachers historically and presently enjoy little clout. A rational choice approach locates educators inside the conversational market; a conflict approach removes teachers from the field.

> ***Merely restating the premises of our professional conversations to the popular press pushes us further from, rather than closer to, possibilities for negotiation.***

While conflict theory nudges composition teachers out of the picture, critical theory draws us back into the frame with all our ideological baggage. A critical view of the public discourse not only directly engages ideology, but it brings our internal disputes to the fore. Divisive issues such as expressionist writing versus writing for the academy, or the relative importance of an emancipatory pedagogy, skew interpretations of the broader public debates. Although such issues are certainly pertinent to the problem of institutional constraints, they suck our feet into the mud. Staying focused on an interpretation of the public discourse that will lead us to developing strategies for negotiation and action requires pushing such issues to the periphery.

Yes, public debates on language issues are political by nature, but the strong political connotations of critical theories of society as well as of our theories of literacy work toward excluding language teachers from the public discourse. In a *Newsweek* report on the 1996 Palisades Education Summit, Jonathan Alter affirms such exclusion, writing, "Educators were left out of the Education Summit, and that was exactly as it should be." The corporate leaders and state governors who gathered to set "world class" standards knew that the presence of educators would not serve their interests. Viewing the summit as a conversational marketplace, the participants' decision to exclude educators might be explained as a rational choice based on business and political interests and on probabilities of maximizing their profits.

The Difference between Rational Choice and Rational Discourse

Rational choice is not the same as rational discourse, but rational discourse is worth consideration as an ideal to which we might aspire. It also serves as a point of entry for moving to a rational choice perspective. As envisioned by sociologist Jurgen Habermas, rational discourse is an ideal situation in which everybody has an equal right to make statements and to criticize statements, and nothing but the better argument counts. Habermas's theory of communicative action distinguishes between simple communication, which involves statements supported by arguments that derive from the dominating knowledge within a community, and rational discourse, which reaches beyond any single community's boundaries. We engage in simple communication when we debate language issues among ourselves, but we cannot rely on our common knowledge when we engage in public discourse.

Aspiring to rational discourse means getting beyond talking to ourselves and weeding out the jargon that confuses (and incites) the public. It means that all our assumptions, values, and beliefs are open to question, and questions deserve respectful, rational answers. Habermas's discourse ethic supports Royster's call for a code of behavior that requires "honor, respect, and good manners across boundaries" (p. 33)—not simply because these may be our values, but because recognition of human dignity and integrity is *inherent in* the discourse situation. Habermas says that when we agree to participate in discourse, we recognize that all parties have the right to say "yes" or "no." If we take this agreement seriously, it follows that we implicitly grant dignity and integrity to all, regardless of how we feel about their opinions. But, can we hold to such an ideal? Can I avoid rolling my eyes when the dean suggests grammar drills? Can I resist responding to calls for back-to-the-basics with glib sarcasm?

Along with sociologist Richard Munch, we might accept Habermas's model as an ideal, but also recognize that conversations in real life are influenced by elements of domination, negotiation, and communal association. Even if we do not focus on power relationships in public discourse, we cannot deny that forces of domination are still at work in the conversational market. Spokespersons at conferences and in the popular press position themselves to negotiate; they do not simply lay out premises and propositions, leaving bland statements to stand on their own merit. And, some kind of communal association is necessary for participants to talk to and listen to each other.

Rational choice theory takes us right to the talking and listening part, with the premise that the basis of human interaction is exchange of goods. As sociologist Randall Collins points out, goods are not only material stuff, but goods include emotional payoffs of solidarity and belonging, dominance as a pleasurable emotion

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in itself, as well as symbolic versions of solidarity and dominance. Viewing the Palisades summit from this perspective, we might suggest that the politicians and CEOs came together with some feeling of solidarity, a feeling they did not share with educators. The exclusion of educators symbolized the organizers' dominance, and the expression of power may have been pleasurable in itself. This rational choice perspective moves toward explanations of what was—and is—actually going on.

The Frame of Rational Choice Theory

Unlike Habermas's rational discourse model, a rational choice view of public discourse takes principles of communal association, negotiation, and domination into account. Collins's particular brand of rational choice theory affords distance by viewing conflict as a process that is embedded in a wider frame of social interaction. His analyses focus on four dimensions of interaction: rituals, conversation, negotiation, and conflict. Rituals bind people together; conversation aims at common construction of meaning; negotiation orients toward mutually drawing advantages; and goal attainment, or conflict resolution, becomes compromising, bargaining behavior (in Munch, p. 114). These dimensions are not sequential, but all are involved in initiating interaction or in continuing interaction.

Beginning with the premise that human beings act in their own best interests, rational choice theory interprets human action as calculation of rewards and costs, along with expected probabilities of rewards occurring. Behavior is determined by expected profits (reward minus cost multiplied by probability of attaining the reward). Seen in this light, a composition teacher's reticence to participate in local public debates on unpopular issues is easily explained—the probability of success may be so slim that it simply is not worth the time, effort, and likelihood of being ostracized.

Looking at the Education Summit through the same lens, corporate leaders attended to serve their interests in development of a skilled workforce. They expected that standards would bring them rewards, and they played the odds that the rewards would outweigh the costs of their time and energy. They did not believe that the contributions of professional educators were worth the costs of including them in the discourse, or, perhaps, they expected that the presence of educators would reduce the probability of reaping rewards.

Likewise, the state governors who attended the summit had particular interests in mind. Whether they touted back-to-basics, opposed standards that might weaken traditional values, or were primarily concerned with home rule, their interests were tied to constituencies. Their underlying interests might have been re-election, personal popularity, or responsible representation. Their work was to calculate the costs, rewards, and probabilities involved in developing national standards.

The absence of educators from the summit, as well as their underrepresentation in the popular press, point to the essential problem of entrance into social encounters. Collins suggests that the extent to which any combination of persons will interact is determined by the match of their market opportunities, their cultural capital, and their emotional energies (p. 371). For example, when Fran's professional association meeting breaks into round-table discussion groups, she scans the room for her market opportunities. Seeing that there are printed name cards at all the seats around tables headed by top leaders in the field, she realizes that her opportunities to shop around are limited. She checks out the people at other tables, aware that the things they talk about and their ways of expression connote their status, or cultural capital. After narrowing her options, Fran chooses a table where the discussion leader is already energetically conversing with other participants. Defining such conversational energy as a "quality of confidence, enthusiasm, warmth, and assertiveness," Collins suggests that emotional energy is the "motivating force that moves one through a series of interactions on the social market" (p. 362).

Broadening Collins's interactional model to public discourse, we see each faction as evaluating opportunities for interaction with other parties, as calculating the relative cultural capital of other parties, and as estimating the emotional energy that other parties might bring to encounters. Based on such notions, we might decide to interact with administrators, with politicians, with CEOs, and with readers of the popular press. And, based on the same notions, administrators, politicians, CEOs, and editors for the popular press may or may not decide to engage us. Taking stock of the writing teachers' situation, we have cause for optimism: our market opportunities are broad; our cultural capital is extraordinary; and our emotional energy is evidenced in our work. We can capitalize on opportunities to write for the popular press, to meet with parent or citizen groups, and to invite politicians and business leaders to participate in language forums. Building on our expertise, we can use our knowledge and skills to communicate effectively. If we are confident and enthusiastic in our classrooms, we can direct that same emotional energy to broader conversational contexts. Beginning interaction should be easy. Then, to sustain conversation, we need to deal with conflict.

Once we open a conversation, conflict arises on several levels: we may not want to speak the same language; we may not want to talk about the same topics; we may have contradictory opinions; and we may want different results. While focusing on these kinds of conflicts is likely to cut conversation off, attending to the ritual nature of interaction can keep the conversation going. Defining conversation itself as a form of natu-

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ral ritual, Collins emphasizes a common focus of attention and a shared emotional tone as creating bonds between or among participants. Ways of talking, certain topics, and particular ideas become symbols of solidarity. Rituals, broadly defined as common symbols, provide order and predictability for continuing interaction.

Collins's interaction ritual chain model suggests that we might seek sources of common symbols in conversational groups or discourse communities to which we already belong. Coming to every encounter equipped with certain verbal symbols which developed from prior group affiliations, we tend to seek out conversation partners whose symbols match our own. When our symbols match, we can use them as a basis for further ritual—we are able to have a conversation. Conversely, mismatched symbols such as "back-to-the-basics" and "whole language" provide no basis for continued interaction.

On the bright side, a rational choice conceptualization of conversation is dynamic. New symbols can emerge, and these can lead to and sustain new conversations. Since conversation itself aims at common construction of meaning, development of symbols is an ongoing process. As we work toward common construction of meanings, we come to understand each other. Essentially, we must move toward some sort of shared construction of reality to be able to coordinate our actions, to rationally pursue goals, and to gratify our needs.

On the darker side, those with more power can turn rituals, conversations, and negotiations toward their advantage to serve their particular interests. A view of conflict settlement as a process of economic transactions recognizes that conversation involves negotiations between parties who are oriented toward deriving advantages from their interaction. Acting rationally, people will try to keep costs down and attempt to maximize their profits. When we affirm that negotiation is a process of mutually drawing advantages, we necessarily position ourselves with flexibility—we assume that giving is required for taking. The challenge is to manage the interrelated elements of ritual, conversation, negotiation, and conflict in an ongoing process of social interaction.

Toward Strategies for Beginning and Continuing Conversation

Opening conversations requires establishing some basis of solidarity and speaking the same language as well as matching market opportunities, cultural capital, and emotional energy. Continuing conversations requires maintenance of solidarity as well as agreeing on terms, topics, and outcomes. Basic to both opening and continuing conversation is attention to the particular interests of each party or faction.

While recognizing that interests always have underlying ideologies, the demise of outcomes-based education illustrates how centering on ideologies closes the conversation. Not only are ideologies emotion-laden, but value systems in America are too complex and diverse to reduce them to discreet factions, such as conservative and liberal. Although Patricia Donahue and Ellen Quandahl blame the American right and the public's reverence for conservatism for staged progress (p. 15), the lines of opposition blur in the public discourse. For example, fuzzing the edges in his syndicated newspaper editorial, Tommy Denton recaps Leo's criticisms of the NCTE standards while also lambasting the influence of business and industry on the educational system. Denton's odd insinuation that the NCTE and technocracy are somehow in cahoots to produce a generation of "angry, soulless, self-indulgent consumers" (p. 2), is just one example of how individuals and groups may jump across lines on any number of related dichotomies—liberal vs. conservative, humanism vs. positivism, individual fulfillment vs. economic needs, multiculturalism vs. ethnocentrism, authoritarianism vs. collaboration. Efforts to deal with multiculturalism are thwarted by the very multiplicity of the opposition; attempts to please everyone please no one. And, ideological dissension among composition theorists and writing teachers further complicates the issues.

Instead of coming out fists-first, I am proposing a strategy for public discourse that is framed by rational choice and grounded in fundamental concepts of language development and language use. The immediate objective is to broaden understanding and untangle misunderstandings of the nature of writing, thus to develop a common ground of shared meanings. Chronicling how the popular press has reflected multiple meanings of "teaching writing" over a century, Anne Ruggles Gere points out that readers find it difficult to participate in the discourse because the contested meanings are not made explicit (pp. 274-75). Journalists lift the jargon and set it against common values and beliefs phrased in common language. "Principles of language acquisition" is suspect whereas "back-to-the-basics" is commonly understood.

The first step, therefore, is to bring Vygotsky's thesis that the study of language must begin with the unit of meaning out into the light of day. Ann E. Berthoff's contention that language is a means of making meaning rather than simply a medium of communication (pp. 12–13) is not so difficult for composition theorists to understand; but, unless we assume that administrators, politicians, and the people who put politicians in office have read theorists like Vygotsky and I. A. Richards, we should not be so arrogant as to expect them to accept arguments caged in the words of our discourse community.

As Kenneth Burke suggests, dealing with the "unconvinced" requires using their vocabulary, values, their symbols (in Lentricchia, p. 37). While

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Burke has been criticized for recommending that reformers adapt their rhetoric to identify with the ideology of the opposition (Clifford, p. 216), his strategy does move toward shared meaning. For instance, we might explain "principles of language acquisition" as "back-to-the-basics" by correctively redefining the basics as "making meaning." Since perceiving and conveying meaning comes at the beginning, and editing comes toward the middle and end, going back to the basics means focusing on making meaning. The words must make sense. In exchange for acceptance of this redefinition of the basics, we concede—even emphasize—that spelling, punctuation, and grammar are not to be neglected. Since writing is using language, the way to learn it is to use it—to practice, practice, practice. ("Practice" is an appealing common symbol.)

The second step is to identify ways that elements of contemporary language theories can be linked to various oppositional camps. Constructing arguments on issues of curriculum, standards, and assessment that relate directly to oppositional factions' values and beliefs requires some sorting out of the opposition. While the CEOs who attended the Education Summit demanded that the educational system serve the requirements of business and industry, they themselves faced opposition from politicians who insisted on local control. Business leaders want standards that ensure that students will be able to function in the workplace; political conservatives call for traditional texts that sustain traditional values; and professors with a positivist bent insist on "standard English." If there is a common denominator, it is an emphasis on the student's functioning within the established economic, social, and academic structures. But centering on the contradiction between a functionalist perspective and writing theories that aim toward social change bogs us down in the conflict situation. Is there any common factor that will enable us to deal with the differences among the oppositional camps and open up possibilities for negotiation?

The negotiative factor that might bridge oppositional factions that resist change is choice—the very element of language that allows resistance to the established order. Choice is central to popular democratic principles, to a Vygotskian theory of writing, to a social constructionist pedagogy, and to Habermas's ideal rational discourse. Choice can apply to arguments for local control as well as to technocratic demands. Presented as a symbol of democracy, choice potentially carries broad appeal.

Focusing on choice as a common democratic value, rather than as a point of conflict, sets up a frame for consensus.

Focusing on choice as a common democratic value, rather than as a point of conflict, sets up a frame for consensus. For example, a case for evaluation by portfolio assessment might appeal to both conservatives' traditional values and technocrats' specialized needs. In functional terms, portfolio assessment serves the needs of business and industry (and students) by focusing on writing for specific purposes and for specific audiences. A technician needs to write concise, unadorned reports; a manager needs to write formal business letters; public relations and marketing specialists need to write to persuade the public. Evaluating students' competence in writing for their chosen specialties is a more precise method of dealing with the demands of the specialized economy than a general writing exam that is based on some generic question totally unrelated to their field. For political conservatives and positivists, portfolio assessment by a team of evaluators can also be a hedge against evaluation by humanist intellectuals who might have a bias for expressive writing.

Agreeing to speak the same language and grounding our conversation on shared meanings set the stage for negotiation; but as Collins points out, continuing conversation hinges not only on appropriating common terms but also on agreeing on topics and outcomes. In an editorial that appeared in local papers from San Francisco to rural Pennsylvania, Jane Kennedy, a high school English teacher, vented about a whole language presentation that did not address her concerns. Kennedy accused the speaker, a "Harvard Ph.D. and author of 15 'or so' books," of being "clueless about the concerns of inner-city students who see education . . . as an escape from the path of the shopping cart, Styrofoam cup, and requests for spare change" (1996). Plunking his whole language package on the table, the presenter did not take questions. Kennedy wants to talk about "reading, writing, self-discipline, and pride of intellect"; politicians and business leaders want to talk about standards, assessment, and accountability. If we do not agree to talk about these topics, the conversation shuts down.

In the conversational marketplace, people look for what they value and shop around. Just as people raised on red meat will resist any sudden switch to vegetables and grains, so will people raised on grammar drills buck a whole language approach. Articles in medical journals and formal presentations do not change eating practices, but a society may gradually shift its buying habits as people read about medical evidence in the popular press and as they talk about health costs and benefits among themselves. Likewise, professional publications and presentations serve our interests, but they do not reach consumers. If we are ever to agree on outcomes, we must consider all the foregoing elements of interaction—speaking the same language, centering on shared symbols, attend-

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ing to individual interests, and using our knowledge of language (cultural capital) to take advantage of market opportunities.

As Gere suggests, the first step toward collective action is to focus directly on the popular press (p. 275). And as Collins suggests, emotional energy is the motivating force that moves us through interactions in the social market (p. 361). Unlike other rational choice theorists who view culture as a set of rules that determine behavior, Collins sees culture as a set of symbols that have to be activated in each situation. His notion that emotions call up our common symbols and charge them with energy finally allows us to honor Berlin's contention that we can never divorce ourselves from our ideologies. If emotional energy in conversation takes the form of confidence, enthusiasm, warmth, and assertiveness, it must be because we believe in what we do. We just need a little distance to focus on a rational approach—to swim to the side to figure out how to negotiate the current. ●

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Leadership and Reform: Morphing the Metaphor

by Collett B. Dilworth, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina

I am a member of a state English teachers council. Tonight at our annual conference, I sit in the audience for a general session on the state's new standards and accountability policy. Most of us here have jobs requiring us to translate such policy into local action; many of us are members of NCTE's Conference on English Leadership. Our speaker is the Director in charge of the legislatively mandated program. He has a lot to say, and he has said it often to various audiences. A personable fellow, a keen glancer, twinkling at times, he rides at the full tide of a career in educational leadership. Only a few minutes into his rhetoric we have become an audience for a presenter as masterly as an infomercial guru. It is 7:35 p.m. on a Thursday. Four hours ago, most of us were teaching a curriculum that tonight we've gathered to hear condemned to reform.

At first thought, "reform" seems one of those simple prefixed words like "untie" and "preowned." The word, however, signals subtle profundities. As organisms, we are by nature organizers, formers, and reformers. We naturally, helplessly organize everything to our use: the food we eat, the air we breath, the reflected light we see. We reform our shoelaces from tangles to bow knots; we form cotton fibers into clothes and dark composts from under the earth into stratospheric suntrapping gasses. The only time we stop forming and reforming is when we cease to exist.

We usually think of "forming" something from raw materials and of "reforming" something already formed but no longer adequate. To form is to create in a usual pattern or to invent a new pattern, to fulfill prevailing expectations or to offer something new and tentative. To reform is more confrontational. Whatever needs to be reformed has been here for a while, has become established and may have garnered vested interests. Both enterprises, forming and reforming, can be risky, but reforming connotes courage. Feeling a

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pulse more deeply than the rest of us, social and educational reformers not only innovate, they often do so against a current of relentless convention.

A strong motivation to reform, however, does not ensure an ethic wholesome for everyone. In the United States, our political system admits radically different ideologies that must compete to advance their agendas, so representatives of a singular viewpoint often find that they ease their struggle as they persuade people who generally oppose them that a particular reform will advance the goals of all parties. For example, in about half the states, citizens antagonistic toward the public schools and citizens committed to public education have cooperated to pass charter school laws.

The significance, the power, of a reform, however, depends on its depth, not its breadth. While the charter school movement promises considerable innovation at the level of the individual school, it does not necessarily threaten the understructure of public education. Within individual schools and school systems, programs such as multiage grouping, site-based management, authentic assessment, and computerized classrooms continue a decades-long process of trying to optimize American public education without radically altering its venerable infrastructure of values. But when foundational values are challenged, when the way we view education as an institution alters, we undertake systemic change. Systemic reform intends not to offer alternatives or to accommodate variant value systems, but to displace competing values altogether.

After outlining the very low levels of literacy to which he is convinced we've fallen, the Director specifies how our educational foundations are to be reformed:

"We are going to take a giant step away from the path we've been on so we can focus on essentials. Now some of you are not going to like this anal-

The significance, the power, of a reform, however, depends on its depth, not its breadth.

ogy, but remember the whole point is to stick as close as possible to reality: The schools are not created for children, they are created for society. Society is what benefits or suffers from its investment in the schools, and if society finds itself suffering it has no one to blame but itself.

"It's like a business producing something that just doesn't give the customers what they are paying for. When that happens in the marketplace, the company that makes the faulty product either goes out of business or changes its product. So in the real world, the market enforces accountability. If you can't make the count you are going to lose your ability.

"What our system has lacked until now is any real accountability. Our educators have lacked consequences for their work. But you all are familiar with the new school accountability program now in its second year. The program gives a pretest-posttest indication of growth in reading and math in grades 3 through 8. If students in a school increase their test scores statistically more than they should be expected to increase given their previous scores, then that school will be awarded up to $1,000 per teacher. But, if the growth level is significantly below what it should be, the state office may revoke all tenure and assume administrative control of that school.

"With this new accountability has come the empowerment for you to take responsibility for what happens in your school. The local systems will no longer have to cope with myriad requirements and guidelines. We've rewritten school law to remove burdensome regulations on the local school systems, regulations such as those on class size, use of teacher assistants, use of textbook funds, and discipline of exceptional children. While the State Department of Education will continue to offer research support and to make helpful materials and techniques available, the local systems are not going to have to look to the state before they take initiatives.

"Now to strengthen our restructuring, we are developing standards to specify what our students should know and be able to do. Students will have to pass tests in the basic areas of processing information, communicating, solving problems, using data, and using technology in grades 4, 8, 10, and 12. If they do not score satisfactorily on these tests, they will not be promoted to the next grade. Social promotion is at an end."

The Director points to an overhead projection of a diagram appearing to be a railroad traversing an inevitable solid line from origin K to destination 12. But there are dotted sidetracks marked 4, 8, 10, and 12.

"Everyone is tired of hand wringing and half measures. Piecemeal reforms are Band-Aids applied to hemorrhages. We are going to stop demanding more and more particular changes. We are going to stop putting more and more little conflicting responsibilities on our schools. We are going to clarify the whole enterprise of public education by focusing on what counts."

We count what is countable, and reflection on how we do so is revealing. To conceive a measure of anything but length or mass, we must think metaphorically. We can point to a meter stick and say "there *is* literally a meter," and we can lift a gram cylinder and with our muscles understand literally that "this *is* a gram." We must envision all other measures (speed, temperature, IQ, etc.), however, as if they were lengths or amounts of mass: a long time or time weighing heavily; miles per hour indicated in lengths on a speedometer; degrees indicated in increments on a smog index; intelligence registered in greater and lesser counts of "amounts."

We depend on measurement meta-

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phors to understand the world more than we may realize. For example, in our society we seem to have a reflexive response to extremes of weather. We insist on knowing just how hot it is or was, and we demand this information in the metaphor of the segmented amount. We conceive that 95 degrees is exactly 5 degrees more than 90 degrees. But if such quanta are the foundation of our knowledge, we might ask if the segmented amount metaphor obscures a more complete understanding of the day's heat. Perhaps if our culture did not seek to segment the weather, our perception of the heat would be more direct. We might not focus our senses through a pretend quantity or the image of length on a thermometer. We might realize the heat more thoroughly with our whole bodies, understanding it as a rich ambiance in which our nerves, secretions, blood circulation, and psyche are integrated.

Everyone knows the venerable professor seated to the right front of the conference room. He smokes sweet tobacco in the kind of pipe that, a generation ago, gravelly uncles used to call "well broken in." He speaks with a Southeastern coastal plains drawl. A careful rhetorician, he wants to enter discourse with, not against, other advocates. His precise wording suggests that he has carefully construed and mentally rehearsed this question:

"You all have given this program a great deal of thought, and you have devoted much labor and conscientious research. Have you reflected, though, on the likelihood that as a result of this very well-intentioned thought and labor and research, some test score means might increase but that major features of literacy might decrease? Are we going to lose things we've just begun to gain?"

The question is too big for his interlocutor. Besides, the rhetorician's voice caught on the last several words and betrayed his emotion. The Director strokes him with deferential compliments and answers by restating the big idea: "We are just going to view everything in a new light, one that's going to make things much more clear."

An assumption as old as Aristotle is that making things clear requires precise, unambiguous language. The idea is that unless we call a spade a "spade," we will find it difficult to fully understand digging. But recently, problems with this assumption have become apparent. Thomas Kuhn and other post-modern scholars offer the insight that our understanding is generated within "paradigms," (ways of seeing the world that are given us by our culture). Poststructuralist theorists have focused on the linguistic nature of these paradigms. To change a paradigm, they suggest, is to change the conventional meanings of words and thereby to alter our fundamental understanding.

The standard example is old but still spry: For someone who believes that the earth is at the center of the universe, the sun really does "set" in the evening. For someone who believes that the earth is in a solar system revolving around the sun, a "sunset" is a quaint figure of speech. From a post-modern perspective, all discourse is figurative in the sense that it derives from figures, schemata, of the universe drawn within a culture's mentality. Digging in the earth with a spade might constitute in one culture an honest labor and in another culture a deranging violation.

We depend on measurement metaphors to understand the world more than we may realize.

In education we are as subject as anyone to paradigmatic metaphors residing at the core of our perceptions. For example, some educators have found that a garden metaphor guides their understanding of children as organic processes, "human becomings" in the phrase from the sixties. Students may have certain genetic determinants, but like flowers, they depend on the entire medium in which they grow. Just as gardeners try to optimize soil, water, and light, so educators arrange for a learning environment richly nurturant in experiences, responses, reflections, and interactions. Because within the metaphor each organism has its own optimum way of developing, garden teachers conclude that the more we try to shape students according to our singular desires, the more we risk stunting them. And since the whole environment educates, garden teachers assess by referencing children's behavior to complex criterion images of interactions with the real world. Metaphors of segmented length and amount do not serve this holistic perspective.

Other quite different metaphors help educators cohere their perceptions. A commercial production metaphor fosters the view of students as products designed for consumers. In this metaphor's purest version, a school is one of the many production facilities seen as the engines of our economy. A school's end consumers are all of society's other producers of goods and services. Like an automobile assembly plant, the school works best when it can assure "total quality control" over its product. The commercial production metaphor naturally calculates educational "quality" in segmented lengths and amounts. Educational total quality control strives for a host of quantified benefits including less violence and higher test scores with more students passing qualifying exams.

In the commercial production metaphor, information is a material to be consumed, manipulated, and put to useful purposes. The goal is productivity and competitive success. While the garden metaphor might foster a value for a broad range of human consciousness including critical and aesthetic reflection, the commercial metaphor encourages educators to put prime value on a few aptitudes (including information processing and computation) deemed

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basic to abundant productivity.

Even though such educational metaphors as the garden and the assembly line seem incompatible, we English teachers have seen them coexist even in the same department. But when one of these metaphors begins to guide systemic reform, we find that any incompatible core metaphors currently guiding educators' perceptions are under pressure to change, or perhaps more accurately, to morph. "Morphing" is a successive change so that from moment to moment the features of an old form alter to closer and closer approximations of a new form.

As educational leaders institute systemic reforms, they begin to exert on parents, teachers, students, and administrators a special creative pressure. This pressure works through goals and expectations, and it morphs the metaphors at the core of the old system into new metaphors through which people perceive in the new system's terms. For example, twenty years ago as the product model of composition curriculum and instruction yielded to the process model, some English teachers began requiring drafts of papers but still graded each draft and averaged the grades. At that point, they were at a psychological stage between the two curriculum models. Then their perspectives changed further until they perceived that to treat an early draft as a product was actually defeating the concept of drafting as part of a larger process. By this time for most English teachers, the old model had altogether reformed into the new one.

Critical theorists explain this process as the "social construction" of consciousness. In analyzing reform, however, we need not construe individuals as helpless matter shaped within a society's tool and dye facility. We need only look among the community of English teachers to see individuals with supple, regenerative, independent minds.

On the left front row sit several teachers anchored to one especially vital, mature woman. By 8:45 p.m., we are all teacher-tired, but she has been sitting tall, her face welcoming, intent. Her hair is carefully done up. She wears a lapelled dark jacket, a blue blouse, a cunning silver medallion on her chest. In the last few minutes, however, she has seemed to shrink, her shoulders rounding, her head inclined over hands upturned in her lap. Her eyes have been staring, not shifting with thought.

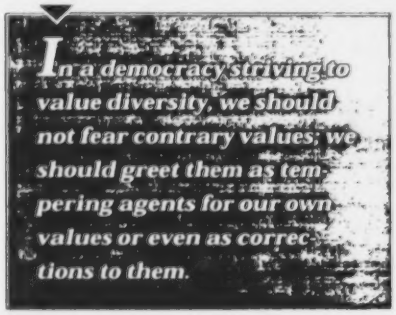
"Total quality control," the Director is saying, "is left to the schools. You are free to develop your curriculums as you see fit for your students. The work of the Standards Commission is directed simply toward providing the measures that will determine the level of quality achieved in the schools. At the state level, we don't care what specifics occur in the classroom. We are only in the business of ensuring that academic standards are met."

Now during this discourse, the front-row teacher reanimates. Her face grimaces into a funny, rubbery half sneer, the kind of expression a really vital teacher throws back at her students to energize them, to show them that not even dubious ideas should be wasted but should be savored and used to wake us up, like jalapenos in an omelet. She raises her hand.

"Are you telling us that whatever we think or do, whatever professional development we go through, like this conference, the basic thing any such thinking or study should do is to increase our students' test scores? Let me put it this way. . . if you don't care what the curriculum is like, if you don't care how the school works, can't we look at our 'product' as not being people but actually as being test scores? Isn't our single product test scores?"

The Director replies: "You don't have to put it that way at all. You'll recall that I've described nothing in these reforms to suggest we shouldn't enrich our students in many ways. Good character, citizenship are very important things, but basic to good citizenship is literacy and specific knowledge. Our citizens have to be able to compete in the global market, or everything goes down the tube."

He gives final answer to her question with another question to which he has the answer: "What's wrong with improved test scores? Would you rather keep on like we are now on our way to the academic achievement of a developing country?"


In a democracy striving to value diversity, we should not fear contrary values; we should greet them as tempering agents for our own values or even as corrections to them.

(The answer reflexively bumped in our minds is, "No! We don't want to be a developing country!")

"But," the teacher replies, "aren't we switching the meanings of 'quantity' and 'quality,' changing what we mean by 'this counts and that doesn't'? It seems to me you're saying that total quality control means being sure we have big enough quantities. Right now to see quality in my classroom, I can't look at a number. I have to see real qualities; I mean like what 'counts' is particular young persons expressing insights exciting in particular places and times."

"Still," the Director replies, "you have to agree that we are not doing well, we must do better, and major reform is absolutely necessary. As long as you meet the benchmarks of academic quality, your teaching can take whatever form you wish."

In *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Milan Kundera ponders form and reform, novelty and invariability, difference and repetition. The novel confronts the problem of whether we should look at life as a series of repeating cycles or as the passing of unique people, places, and things that occur only once and disappear. Kundera uses Nietzsche's metaphor of mass to describe the effects these two perspectives have on us. Things

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that repeat have substance and weight, a "heavy" presence in our lives. Although they may disappear for the present, their cycles are part of life, and we must bear the weight of their moral implications. In contrast, things that happen once and never again have no substance, no weight. They are "light" and exist only as fading nonsubstantial memories, and we need not bear their moral implications in our present lives.

For example, on the one hand we might consider a particular weather event, Hurricane Fran, as singular. Fran had an existence in 1996 that will never recur. There can only be one "Fran." On the other hand, we might view Fran as an instance of a recurring form, a looming inevitability in our lives. Practically, people treat events like Fran both ways. Some behave as if the storm was the singular event it indeed was, and they confidently rebuild their wrecked homes on the old foundations. Others treat it as an instance of a recurring devastation, which it indeed was, and they flee their homes for good.

We see the dilemma of lightness and weight in educational reform. On the one hand, we might look on a particular movement as a unique event in the history of education that will, like every other reform, fade away. Eventually, this lightness metaphor encourages us to be indifferent in the face of perpetual innovation: "Why bother with this stuff? It's all going to be changed next year anyway." On the other hand, we might find a particular reform simply a repetition of an underlying cycle that will never be defeated or finally successful. Eventually, the weight metaphor encourages us to feel doomed to endless cycles of advance and retreat: "I'm sick to death of this fight. These [conservatives/liberals] never give up and will never let us make things as they should be."

Kundera doesn't resolve the dilemma in his novel. The book does suggest, however, that the way to salvation is not through ignorance or suppression. It would seem that we teachers owe it to ourselves and our students to understand pending reforms thoroughly. To resist having our core metaphors morphed unconsciously, we must first realize them, then keep them in clear view while thinking through the values they comprise. In a democracy striving to value diversity, we should not fear contrary values; we should greet them as tempering agents for our own values or even as corrections to them. So instead of ignoring or avoiding reform, we do well to welcome its appearance. Reform movements, whether they are cyclic or not, submit our values to their most vigorous, vitalizing tests. As values undergo the test of reform, they may or may not change, but they can strengthen.

The Director concludes graciously. He has given a vigorous presentation, for him a gratifying culmination to a full day. We applaud.

Everyone is leaving now. The teacher from the front walks by me with a group of her colleagues. Their shoulders are square, their chins up. The professor of rhetoric walks by, his hands patting pockets where his pipe and its accouterments are kept. His face is reflective. Finally the Director and a knot of listeners pass by, and then nothing is left of the meeting but a few handouts and Styrofoam cups. What is emptier than a vacated conference room?

I have left some registration materials in my car. I go outside to retrieve them. Returning, I pause at the corner of the hotel. The moon is bright; there are a few clouds moving fast. The trees sway. At my feet, at the wall, over the hunkered cars in the parking lot, before the moon, the shadows form and reform. ●

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Leadership in the Outback: An Experiment with Tutoring in the University Extension

by Roger Ochse, Black Hills State University, Spearfish, South Dakota

Ellsworth Air Force Base spreads across the South Dakota high plains, pressing into the Black Hills and nearby Rapid City. Ellsworth is a remote place, 320 miles west of Sioux Falls, South Dakota's largest city, and 400 miles north of Denver. The Black Hills State University Ellsworth Extension lies 60 miles east from the main campus in Spearfish. A mixture of regular campus and part-time adjunct faculty teach 900 nontraditional working students taking classes in general education, business, and social sciences. Transported by van for the two-hour round trip, the full-time campus faculty—among the lowest paid in the nation—teach at Ellsworth in order to supplement their salaries. Ellsworth students attend classes after a long day's work and rarely see their instructors outside of class time. It is not unusual for students here to work two jobs and take two or three night courses.

In this "outba[illegible]" of higher education, English leadership has much to overcome. How can leadership be developed in a place traditionally

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neglected by English departments? How can collegiality, teamwork, and innovation be enhanced? How can at-risk students, particularly in beginning writing courses, be reached and hopefully assisted?

When I joined the Ellsworth faculty in January 1990 as an adjunct instructor assigned to teach English 101, it seemed I had reached the frontier. The only support I received from the main campus was a copy of the standard course syllabus and the writing handbook. Local administration concerned itself with registering students and making sure they had textbooks and a classroom. I was on my own. As I arrived at a converted trailer for my first class, I had no idea what to expect. I gave my 30 students a diagnostic essay, and found they ranged in extremes of ability and experience. During my second class (we met weekly for three hours), a young woman identifying herself as a tutor asked to make a brief presentation to the class. She told the students that if they needed help with their papers, they could reach her at the Extension office, either as a walk-in or by appointment. Whether the students ever saw the tutor I cannot say, but about seven of them dropped the course by the end of the 16-week semester.

In 1993 I became a full-time faculty member commuting from the main campus. Since my first teaching experience at Ellsworth, I had wondered about the academic support provided to students outside class. The attrition rate seemed high even with my limited experience. Beyond the dropout problem, I wondered whether students were gaining the writing skills so essential to their academic success. Were we doing all we could to ensure that our writing pedagogy was getting long-term results? There did not seem to be any coordinated approach to our writing program at Ellsworth. The faculty, like the students, put in their three hours per week and then evaporated—or so it seemed—until the next week.

The Ellsworth administration, in consultation with the Department of the Air Force, believed these problems needed urgent attention. At-risk students required aggressive intervention to prevent their failure in beginning courses and subsequent dropping out of the academic program. The traditional tutoring program in place at the time was not available to most students because they could not take time off from their busy work schedules to meet with a tutor at the Extension office. In addition, tutoring for some students had the stigma of a remedial program. Under these conditions, it was no wonder Ellsworth students who needed assistance were not working with tutors.

A Six-Part Supplemental Instruction Program

When I was asked to develop a program to address the needs at Ellsworth, I decided to adopt the Supplemental Instruction (SI) program implemented at our main campus two years earlier (Ochse, p. 8). SI student leaders or tutors served as facilitators who targeted all students, not only those at risk. SI tutors attended classes with the students and supplemented the pedagogy of the instructor. Most important, they provided individual attention to at-risk students during the only time they were accessible—during class. In our campus study, we found that SI could significantly reduce student failure and attrition, and at the same time improve student grades. Could SI also address the problems at Ellsworth?

The Supplemental Instruction Program in Written Communication had six parts:

1. *Hiring of Tutors.* Starting from a list of former writing students, I hired five SI tutors for the five sections of our beginning writing courses, taught by five instructors. (Three sections were 16-week English 101 classes; one section was an 8-week English 101 course, followed by 8 weeks of English 102; and one section was a 16-week English 102 class.) The hiring pool was supplemented by BHSU English majors living near Ellsworth and writing students suggested by other instructors. All tutors were either English majors or general education students with excellent grades in their required writing courses.

2. *Tutor Training.* In addition to in-classroom training and supervision provided each tutor by the instructors, I furnished tutors copies of *The Practical Tutor* (Meyer and Smith) and *The Little, Brown Handbook* (Fowler and Aaron). At the end of the fall semester, I met with the five tutors at a downtown Rapid City coffeehouse. They discussed in detail the role of the tutor, and made suggestions concerning future SI classrooms. The tutors recommended the following: (1) tutors should be introduced to the students early in the semester; (2) their roles as tutors should be clearly identified both to instructors and students; and (3) tutors should be involved in the scoring of the diagnostic essays, both for developing a relationship between instructors and tutors and for gaining an early understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the students' writing.

In the spring, I asked the tutors to write me a letter describing their best and worst experiences as a tutor and suggesting any changes they would make in the program. Of special value were their comments on helping individual students. I was impressed with their positive attitudes toward the students and the tutoring experience:

> *I have helped one individual especially. She was on the verge of quitting and said it was this class that helped her decide to stay in school.*
>
> *A student asked me for assistance. We discussed some trouble spots within her paper, and I gave her positive feedback to lead her in the right direction. She revised her work to her satisfaction and received a commendable grade. It was worthwhile being involved with this student's progress.*

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I helped one student with his first paper. We worked together very hard, and he got an "A." The same happened with the second paper. Ever since, he does not have enough words to thank me for my help. Moreover, every time another student asks him what he does to get As, his answer is "Go have Gisella help you."

3. *Tutor Activities.* Instructors offered a variety of class activities for tutors. One faculty member worked in tandem with his tutor in reading student writing assignments, asking the tutor to identify potential writing problems. Another instructor placed her tutor in special "help" sessions for all students, where papers were discussed and responded to but not scored. Another encouraged his tutor to lead discussions from the class reading text (Buscemi and Smith), as students were grouped in study circles and responded to prepared questions. All instructors reported having their tutors meet individually with students to work on their papers. Some sessions were required; most were voluntary.

4. *Faculty-Coordinator Liaison.* All five instructors cooperated in supervising their tutors' classroom work, in participating in the holistic scoring sessions, and in collecting and furnishing all data I had requested. Their attitude was positive, professional, and supportive.

5. *Faculty Supervision of Tutors.* Prior to the start of the fall semester, I distributed materials on SI and our reason for implementing the program at Ellsworth. I assured the instructors that we were colleagues in this experiment, and that my job was to support their success in this effort. Both faculty and tutors were reminded that the classroom instructor was in complete charge of the course and classroom. Any activities of the tutor, including helping with class discussion, student papers (in or out of the classroom), were supplemental to the teaching of the instructor. Instructor cooperation was essential because the program's success hinged on the faculty investing in the idea of Supplemental Instruction.

6. *Assessment of Results.* Results of the SI experiment were measured in three ways: the English Diagnostic Essay; the Student Opinion Survey; and the Student Attrition Data.

English Diagnostic Essay. In the first two weeks of the fall semester, students (n=79) were administered an English Diagnostic Essay (EDE), which was scored holistically by the five-member writing faculty, assisted by one tutor. Essays received scores of 1, 2, or 3 (low to high), indicating ratings of their writing skills in various categories. During the final two weeks of the semester, all instructors again administered the EDE. This time, it was scored by the individual instructors with assistance by their tutors. I then collected and tabulated the scores. A comparison of initial and final EDE scores indicated a 26.4 percent increase in writing proficiency. This figure compared favorably with an equivalent statistic taken from the 1994 SI program at BHSU (Ochse, p. 9).

The spring 1997 semester statistics were even more dramatic. During the final two weeks of the semester, the EDE was again administered, scored by the instructor with the tutor assisting. Two sections participated in this study, an English 101 class and an English 102 class. A comparison of initial and final EDE scores (n=49) indicated a 31.4 percent increase in writing proficiency.

Several variables may have affected the EDE scores, particularly the comparison between initial and final scores. These included: the variable of instructional techniques, the differences in students from section to section; the nature of the student body, particularly the nontraditional students whose initial scores may have been repressed on account of lack of writing experience; the relatively small sample of the population of students.

The Student Opinion Survey. Students were asked to give their opinions on eight statements. They provided responses on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. One statement required a numerical answer corresponding to the number of times the tutor helped the student with his or her paper. (For a copy of the survey and other information, I may be reached on the Internet at rochse@mystic.bhsu.edu.)

During the first year of the SI program, nearly all students (99%) agreed that a tutor was introduced to their class and they understood the role of the tutor (99%). The average student obtained tutorial help 2–3 times. Twenty-two percent, however, sought no tutor assistance in the fall semester; in the spring, only 12 percent went without help. During the year, 20 percent received help only once. About 40 percent went to a tutor for assistance on 2–3 papers. Over 16 percent sought out help 4–5 times. Only 4 percent went to a tutor 6 times or more in the fall semester; nearly 10 percent did so in the spring.

Over 70 percent of the students surveyed believed the tutor was helpful to them in their writing. When asked whether the tutor made a significant difference in their writing, however, over 40 percent were neutral in their response. Yet over 46 percent registered an agreeable or strongly agreeable reaction to this important statement. Over 82 percent felt the tutor was a useful addition to the class. Students who saw the tutor more often tended to regard him or her more favorably. Conversely, students who met with a tutor rarely or not at all tended to view the tutor's presence unfavorably.

Student Attrition Data (English 101 only). With only one year's information, along with such a small sampling, it is difficult to draw conclusions from the data available on student attrition. (Since the data from the earlier BHSU study had been restricted to English 101, I decided to exclude the one section of English 102 from this portion of the analysis.) In the academic year prior to the implementation of the SI program (1995–96), student attrition

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(students dropping the course without taking a grade of F) was trending downward from the previous period (1994–95). During this time, attrition fell from 8.2 percent to 4.7 percent. In the 1996–97 academic year, the first year of SI, attrition averaged 2.0 percent. From the 1996 fall semester to the 1997 spring semester, attrition declined from 3.7 percent to 0.0 percent. On the main campus in Spearfish, the attrition rate for control sections in fall 1994 (the only local data available) was 6.9 percent; the rate in experimental sections (SI tutors with the same instructor) was 6.1 percent. In nonparticipating sections, the attrition rate was 9.3 percent.

The Ellsworth data, while lacking the experimental controls of the main campus study, appeared to indicate that the most significant factor in reducing student attrition was that of instruction itself. Closer analysis revealed that instructors who employed multiple drafting, revising, and editing along with a portfolio approach to their writing pedagogy tended to have higher grades, and lower failure and attrition rates—with or without tutors in the classroom. In spring 1996, the last semester before SI tutors were introduced into the classroom, two instructors using these more student-centered classroom approaches generated a zero attrition rate, a zero failure rate, along with dramatically higher grades than other instructors employing more traditional methods in the fall 1995 semester (3.6 compared with 2.2 on a 4.0 scale). These statistics in themselves do not indicate improvement in student writing; however, they do show that more student-centered pedagogy can keep and motivate students in the writing classroom. We must assume that bringing Supplemental Instruction into already progressive classrooms can only enhance student performance.

Impact of the SI Program

At the end of its first year, the SI Program in Written Communication had made a promising beginning. Tutors were hired from lists of former students known to the instructors, and for the most part turned out to be reliable and dedicated. Faculty, both full-time and adjunct, proved to be most cooperative. Tutors, faculty, and students alike seemed to appreciate the renewed attention given to the teaching process at Ellsworth.

Faculty learned through their own experience that bringing tutors into the classroom can alter the instructional equation. A new partnership was being formed in the process of teaching. Before students could become comfortable with the tutors, instructors had to be comfortable with them. Likewise, the tutors were placed in an awkward role, hovering somewhere between faculty and student. Each instructor had to define that role for the tutor and communicate it clearly to the class. Sometimes that role had to be worked out in process between instructor and tutor. When the tutors and faculty alike responded to my informal polling near the end of the fall semester, they leaned in favor of faculty-tutor continuity. Scheduling conflicts may hinder this continuity, but the instructor-tutor partners did seem to need more than a semester to achieve an effective working relationship.

Likewise, full participation in diagnostic essay scoring by tutors and faculty appeared to engage everyone in knowing the students and their writing from the outset. Faculty-tutor scoring, therefore, seemed to enhance the likelihood of more successful intervention in helping students with their writing problems. An effective tutor training program should integrate many of these insights and involve all instructional staff.

Based on the statistical data and anecdotal descriptions, the SI Program in Written Communication has provided an important service to Ellsworth students. Significant differences in diagnostic writing scores, as well as high levels of student satisfaction with their tutors and lower attrition rates, argue for the continuation of the program. Perhaps most important, the SI program has been meeting its primary goal: to make tutoring assistance accessible to busy working students. Having the tutors available during class has enhanced a supportive learning environment. Tutors reported that once initial contact had been made with students, it had been much easier to continue that working relationship outside the classroom—over the telephone, via e-mail, or even in person. This student-tutor rapport appears to have had a major impact on some students' attitudes toward the writing task and toward their college education in general.

Summary: A Leadership Perspective

Teaching at a university extension can be regarded by faculty as an isolating and even alienating activity. Separated from the main campus and its academic culture, the university extension can seem to adjunct faculty a place without community or support. A well-managed SI program can help bring these faculty away from their comparative isolation and more into the mainstream of academic life. The Coordinator can provide this support in a collegial way, showing interest in the individual faculty member and checking regularly to see how things are working out with his or her tutor. Regarded as a full partner and colleague, the adjunct instructor will be encouraged to invest in programs that require and reward cooperation with other English faculty—and transform the "outback" into a center for educational progress. ●

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Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

August 1998 (deadline March 15, 1998)
Problem-Based Learning

October 1998 (deadline June 15, 1998)
Mentoring and Developing Future Leaders

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Henry Kiernan, Editor, *English Leadership Quarterly*, West Morris Regional High School District, Administration Building, Four Bridges Road, Chester, NJ 07930; phone 908-879-6404, ext. 278; fax 908-879-8861; e-mail kiernan@nac.net. ●

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Liaison to Conference on English Education
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▶ IN THIS ISSUE

Dimensions of Leadership

by Henry Kiernan, editor

One of my favorite books is Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal's *Leading with Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit* (1995). In the form of a modern parable, Bolman and Deal lead us to discover that heart, hope, and faith, rooted in soul and spirit, are necessary for tomorrow's leaders to develop communities of meaning and for our society to discover its ethical and spiritual center. Their work calls for a revolution in how we think about leadership and how leaders and managers are trained, and cogently defends the need for leaders to develop the reflective capacity to learn on their own and to discover their spiritual center.

At a recent statewide technology conference, I was part of a presentation that reminded me of this reflective dimension of leadership. My role was an easy one: I just had to tell the story—the implementation history of a successful grant—and introduce the speakers who did the real work. As anyone who has prepared for a shared panel presentation (especially a session using technology—this one involved a live video conference with NASA in Houston) knows, there is always the sense of "living on the edge" as co-presenters, audience participants, and the proximity of electrical outlets are all extemporaneously choreographed. Having the fortunate opportunity to watch the presentation play out, I had time to observe closely and to listen to Gil Moscatello, one of my colleagues, tell his version of the story.

It was as if I heard the story for the first time. To observe Gil's enthusiasm, to watch and hear the focused reactions, affirmed for the audience that the presenters were busy having fun because they love what they do. In his latest book on creativity, a noted expert comments on how all of his highly creative subjects are engaged in work that they love, and that it is worth a great deal to navigate our way into places where we have fun and love our jobs (M. Csikszentmihalyi in *Creativity*, 1996).

From these reflections I believe I have addressed the collective wisdom of this issue's authors. In the words of Kathy Siegfried, Alyce Hunter, and Jim Kennedy, I found a similar sense of loving their work and a dimension of leadership rooted in the enduring sense of courage, wisdom, and compassion. ●

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Editor's Note: *The new publication schedule for* English Leadership Quarterly *takes effect after this issue. Now the* Quarterly *will be published in August, October, February, and April.*

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Breaking the Bonds of Time: Block Scheduling as a Pathway to Change

by Kathleen Siegfried, Bordentown Regional School District, Bordentown, New Jersey

In the handful of years and minutes that remain prior to the Millennium, perhaps the clock—not the computer—symbolizes an essential direction in educational reform. Across the nation, school districts are exploring ways that the powerful resource, *time*, may be a catalyst for fostering positive program change. This is particularly true in secondary school settings, where an innovation known as block scheduling means more than the reallocation of scheduled time. It means creating systemic change in the ways that students learn and teachers teach.

Bordentown Regional High School in Bordentown, New Jersey, will complete its third year of block scheduling in June 1998. The plan for restructuring the use of time at BRHS began over five years ago with the vision and concern of a high school principal, in response to an emerging problem. Ironically, the problem had resulted from a change originally considered a solution: the implementation of an eight-period school day, 40 minutes per period. While the eight-period schedule had given Bordentown's 500-plus students greater flexibility and choice, it had also resulted in a factory-like, production line environment. Parents and students complained about increased course failures and academic ineligibility. Teachers noted a decline in the quality of students' work, especially in work completed at home. There was general agreement about the source of the problem: *Too much to do in too little time!*

Referring to the typical American high school as an "assembly line," national consultants Robert Canady and Michael Rettig open *Block Scheduling: A Catalyst for Change in High Schools* with this statement from a 1994 congressional report prepared by the National Education Commission on Time and Learning:

> Learning in America is a prisoner of time. For the past 150 years, American public schools have held time constant and let learning vary. The rule, only rarely voiced, is simple: learn what you can in the time we make available. It should surprise no one that some bright, hard-working students do reasonably well. Everyone else—from the typical student to the dropout—runs in to trouble. *Time is learning's warden* (National Education Commission on Time and Learning, 1994; in Canady & Rettig, 1995, p. 1).

Certainly the constraints of time, as manifested by the eight-period schedule, had created a felt need for change in Bordentown.

As supervisor of English/language arts and library/media in Bordentown, I had found the 40-minute period an impediment to achieving instructional goals within the department and across the curriculum. Most teachers did their best to develop interactive strategies that engaged their students as active rather than passive learners. Most taught process-writing lessons and incorporated research activities and projects. Some tried to integrate writing conferences, peer editing, and technology-based activities. Some relied primarily on teacher-centered strategies, paper/pencil tests, and workbook/textbook activities. In spite of staff development efforts to increase reading and writing activities across the curriculum, teachers in other departments expressed concerns about achieving their own content-related goals while integrating communicative activities and assessments.

Moreover, with only 40 minutes of daily planning time, there was limited opportunity for this seasoned,

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veteran staff to research and develop significantly new strategies or materials. Like Horace—another veteran English teacher and the central character in Theodore Sizer's visionary series about American high schools—most Bordentown teachers were doing the best they could do, given the circumstances. And like Horace, they recognized the reality of their compromises (Sizer, 1992, p. 7).

Convinced that student-centered, interactive learning experiences were essential for the development of students' communicative and critical skills, I found it frustrating and difficult to refute the truth of teachers' perceptions: "This all takes time that I just don't have!" Block scheduling could, I thought, provide classroom teachers with that missing element—time. Time to plan. Time to focus in greater depth with half the students. Time to interact, to discuss, to vary activities, to incorporate technology. Time for students to focus on fewer subjects in more depth with greater success. Time, indeed, remained a key variable as a two-year process of change began.

Motivating Human Change

An instructional and organizational change with the magnitude of block scheduling requires an all-encompassing transition process rather than an arbitrary mandate from school leaders. In *Horace's School: Redesigning the American High School*, Theodore Sizer describes the threatening nature of ambitious change—even when the need for change is recognized. Continuing to "do more of what we do now" poses far less risk than do the unknown perils of change (1992, p. 86).

In addition to being "prisoners of time" in secondary schools, educators are too often shackled by the very human tendency to fear and avoid change. There is much to be learned about leadership and the challenge of motivating human change in Plato's "The Allegory of the Den." Those who teach this classic tale know that Plato's den dwellers mistake the shadows seen on the walls of their prison cave, brightened only by the light of a fire, for reality. Not knowing or perhaps not even considering a way out, the prisoners complain about the cold, dark cave but unite in their adaptation to it. One prisoner, however, showing the risk-taking penchant characteristic of most leaders, notices a sort of ladder and climbs outside, where he finds the sun. In pain at first from the unfamiliar brightness, he returns to the cave to share his discovery and motivate his friends to follow. But his new "vision" has separated the leader from his friends. Not only do they disbelieve and ridicule him, they also assure him that they are perfectly comfortable as they are (Jowett, 1969, pp. 5–6).

Time for involvement and collegial exploration must be provided if belief in the change is to occur among all stakeholders—particularly among teachers, who will bring change to life in their classrooms.

Plato's young leader discovered not only the brilliance of light but critical lessons about leadership, helping roles, and change. One lesson is simple and obvious, in the view of Seymour Sarason (founder of the Yale Psycho-Educational Clinic): "People do not take kindly to departures from their accustomed ways of thinking and acting, even when they claim they are motivated to do so" (1995, p. 66). On the other hand, the leader who builds trust and invites active participation in decision-making will motivate positive attitudes and active involvement. For Sizer's Horace, the most bitter reality was his awareness of the limited control that he had over his destiny at work (1992, p. 8). Time for involvement and collegial exploration must be provided if belief in the change is to occur among all stakeholders—particularly among teachers, who will bring change to life in their classrooms.

Developing the Proposal

At Bordentown Regional, involvement in the change process began informally with the sharing of information about block scheduling to interested staff and parents. As interest grew, these efforts were formalized with the organization of a task force of staff, parents, students, administrators, and board of education members. Task force membership was voluntary; anyone who wanted to discuss and be involved in a recommendation—for or against "the block"—was welcomed.

The stated purpose of the task force—to improve educational opportunity for the district's students by reorganizing the school day—involved restructuring the academic day to address the following goals:

- to increase academic focus and depth of understanding by reducing the breadth of student involvement,
- to enhance students' opportunities for academic success,
- to decrease student failures and behavior problems,
- to increase staff competency in student-centered instructional strategies, and
- to increase monitoring of hallways, thereby safeguarding the instructional environment.

After a seven-month investigation that included school visitations and research, the task force reached consensus about the feasibility of block scheduling in the district. To achieve the stated goals, the group recommended the adoption of the "4/4" or "Basic Plan" for block scheduling. In this plan each school day is divided into four blocks of 85–90 minutes of instructional time, and the year is divided into two semesters (Canady & Rettig, 1995, p. 68).

With the implementation of the 4/4

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Plan at Bordentown Regional High School, students would take four classes each semester, or a total of eight classes each year. (There are no study halls.) BRHS teachers would teach three classes each day, cutting their daily class and student "load" in half. The typical teacher would meet with about 60–70 students during a semester as opposed to 120–140 during the eight-period plan. Moreover, a full 85-minute daily planning period would double available planning time for teachers. Finally, time previously wasted in change of classes and movement of students would be reduced, while the amount of available instructional time overall would increase.

Regardless of the benefits promised by block scheduling, task force members knew that they must address the greatest challenge: planning for instructional strategies that maximized teachers' usage of extended time in the classroom with students. Recognizing that not "even a cooperative faculty will adjust to the block schedule without some difficulty," the Task Force recommended a significant expansion of the existing staff development program (Shortt & Thayer, 1997, p. 12). Another recommendation called for hiring a hallway monitor since teachers would be freed of duties (except during the lunch/study hall period) in order to have more available time for planning and consultation.

With the strong support of the superintendent, the school board unanimously approved all task force recommendations, including the expanded staff development program. Needless to say, this kind of support—from the superintendent and other key administrators and school leaders—is vital to the success of a far-reaching change like block scheduling.

Preparing for the Transition

When the school board approved the plan, nine months remained until block scheduling would be in full operation. Two phenomena emerged:

> ***What this plan for block scheduling had given us was time to focus on change, as well as on one other critical element: a felt need for change.***

anxiety and questions! What kind of staff development? Who will decide? Will it be enough? Will we really be ready in September?

In the belief that a successful professional development plan must—like the original block scheduling proposal—be based on staff involvement, a staff development team (a subcommittee formed from the original task force) accepted the challenge of addressing these and other questions. Fortunately, there were teachers who believed that block scheduling would increase their opportunities to do more for and with their students. As advocates of the block, many of these teachers were actively involved on this staff development team, which also included other teachers, administrators, and parents. The parents offered important perspectives about their hopes for the block, sharing their concerns as well as those of their children. Not only did parents provide a sounding board and support system for the team, they also helped to ameliorate the fears of other parents in the community through informal communications. Parents were active members of a team that set this primary goal: to move teachers from anxiety to confidence relative to teaching and learning in a block schedule.

As leader of this staff development team, I suspected that among ourselves we already knew answers that would resolve many of the questions that challenged us. What this plan for block scheduling had given us was time to focus on change, as well as on one other critical element: a felt need for change.

The staff development team addressed teachers' anxiety and their felt need for change by developing a survey that enabled them to express their concerns, hopes, and recommendations. (Other subcommittees were simultaneously addressing questions and concerns of students and parents.) Teachers responded to the survey in detail. In addition to asking what the new schedule would look like and how it would work, they most frequently mentioned concerns about keeping students—especially unmotivated ones—interested and on task for 85 minutes each day. Lecture, certainly, could not be the dominant teaching strategy. They wondered, too, about covering course content. Would they have enough time? Would they run out of material?

While this survey afforded teachers a chance to communicate these and a wide range of other general and content-specific concerns, it also provided a forum for recommendations that would form the basis of their own staff development program. This program then fostered their continued, active involvement and gave them a most essential resource: time. Regularly scheduled faculty meetings gave teachers time to learn specifically how the schedule would work and fostered dialogue about decisions that would be reached collegially. A great deal of information was generated by teachers themselves, who in three 10-member teams, had visited nearby Pennsylvania high schools to observe and speak with teachers who were already teaching in extended time schedules.

Implementing the New Schedule

These meetings and visitations set the stage for the formal staff development program. In the past, the prevailing attitude about staff development or inservice workshops had been one of skepticism—the staff saw "experts" come and go, too often leaving behind irrelevant or fragmented information and little or no opportunity for follow-up. Now, given the opportunity to work together on topics that they needed and wanted to

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explore, teacher consensus showed three topics of greatest need: instructional strategies, particularly cooperative learning; library resource/technology integration; and curriculum review/revision. In addressing the issue of presenters, teachers expressed a preference for using inhouse expertise rather than outside consultants. As a result, the staff development team planned a six-day series of workshops using our own staff.

Assisted by teachers who felt comfortable with and administratively sanctioned to use interactive cooperative learning strategies, I presented a two-day workshop on the basics of cooperative learning, linking the topic to considerations about learning styles. Workshop participants then had the opportunity to visit, by way of videotape, five classrooms in our own school where cooperative learning strategies had been successfully implemented. The teachers of those classrooms were the guides, leading their colleagues through the process of developing, implementing, and assessing activities. A most powerful moment occurred when teachers saw on videotape one of the school's most notoriously disaffected students taking a productive leadership role during a group task in his social studies class.

Teachers were given both cooperative learning models to try out in their classes and time to work together to develop lesson plans. Guidelines for designing activities included a recommendation to begin with pairs rather than larger cooperative learning groups. Sample lesson plans with suggested strategies and estimated time allotments for varied activities were designed.

The change to block scheduling also demanded that participants look at strategies—both how we teach and what we teach.

Throughout the staff development program, teachers themselves had opportunities to work in cooperative groups, using many of the strategies and models recommended for use with their students. A culminating cooperative learning strategy, developed by the library/media specialist, engaged teams of teachers in a research activity that promoted group exploration of the varied resources of the library/media center. In addition to learning more about the resources available, teachers shared ideas for integrating library/media resources into their instructional planning (see sidebar on this page).

Exploring Some Benefits of Block Scheduling

In Bordentown the focus on block scheduling provided new impetus for teachers to integrate, rather than "add on," research activities that provide learning experiences beyond the walls of their classrooms. Now, in our third year of block scheduling—with the addition of classroom computers networked to library/resources and with access to the Internet—the library/media center has become the busiest place in the school. No longer the domain of a few departments and college-bound students, research activities across curricular areas are done by all. In this age of information explosion, our students are learning to find, evaluate, synthesize, and present information in a variety of modes and contexts.

The change to block scheduling also demanded that participants look at strategies—both *how* we teach and *what* we teach. Some teachers wondered whether the move to block scheduling would require immediate and total curricular revision. Obviously, this was an overwhelming and daunting consideration—nearly enough, some thought, to squelch the entire project. What made more sense, we decided, was to give teachers time and freedom to look at their existing curriculum, to determine

A Word about Research Activities

The single most important resource in a school library is the media specialist. No longer the guardian of books and the gatekeeper of silence, the contemporary media specialist provides expertise and assistance in the planning of research activities to teachers in all subject areas. Prior to the implementation of block scheduling, the BRHS media specialist had successfully worked to motivate more teachers to include research activities in their instructional *planning*. Yet many teachers had remained skeptical about library research. It was one more thing to add to a busy schedule, something that students should be doing in college prep English and history classes.

An incident with a "lower-level" class during the first year of block scheduling revealed a great deal about students' expectations of research projects. A teacher, in the midst of outlining a group project and presentation, was interrupted by a student. "You don't understand," he said politely. "We're not the college prep class. We do worksheets, not projects!" Today, state and national standards mandate that all students demonstrate the ability to use multiple resources, to think critically, and to communicate with clarity and power. Block scheduling "allow(s) students variable amounts of time for learning, without lowering standards, and without punishing those who need more or less time to learn" (Canady & Rettig, 1995, p. 12).

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curriculum priorities, and to look for areas where thematic integration might occur. Teachers were encouraged to make decisions, to experiment, to share. This sort of curricular decision making prompted movement away from rote learning of discrete skills or information and toward integration, problem solving, and critical thinking. We asked that teachers think not so much about what they wanted to "cover", but what they wanted students to know and be able to do. Sizer, in outlining principles for the Coalition of Essential Schools, says, "The aphorism 'Less is more' should dominate: curricular decisions should be guided by the aim of thorough student mastery and achievement rather than by an effort merely to cover content" (Sizer, 1996, p. 154). After the first year of block scheduling, teachers reported on a survey that they believed there had been an increase in depth of learning, even though many felt they had "covered" less material. Some also said that by reorganizing and integrating content, they had covered more material while achieving greater depth as exhibited by students' performance.

By the end of the first year of block scheduling, teacher surveys also indicated that if given the chance, only 8.5% of the faculty would choose to return to the former schedule. Student surveys showed only a slightly higher percentage wishing to change back; the predominant complaint was the decreased amount of time to see friends between classes!

Other outcomes pointed to the positive impact of the program: significant decrease in student failure rate and significant increase in honor roll and athletic eligibility. Teachers reported that they were using paired and group work on a daily basis and that they knew their students better than they had in the past. Teachers also report that the 85-minute planning time has been particularly useful. Most agree with the teacher who said, "I really use my planning time for work now. Before, with 40 minutes, I had time to check my mailbox, get some coffee, go to the bathroom, maybe make a phone call. Then, with only 10 minutes or so left, I usually just went to sleep!"

Another outcome of block scheduling, from my vantage point as a supervisor and staff developer, has been a positive difference in atmosphere and attitude about staff development and change. Board-approved time allotments for staff development more than doubled the first year of block scheduling, which occurred concurrently with the installation of our computer network and classroom computers. The increased amount of staff development time has remained constant, while additional programs offering CEU credits are available through after-school course work. The movement to block scheduling sparked and then reinforced an increased awareness of the nature of change and the mandate to provide time for change, time for ongoing development and growth, time for teachers to be involved—working together to effect change.

In the English/language arts department at Bordentown, we are accustomed to change—and I doubt that we are unique. Many of us were around when writing process and whole language were new. We have debated with one another about grammar and literature canons. We have seen the impact of technology and media upon communication processes and contexts. And for the most part, we have optimistically explored new ground, treading with caution and with varying degrees of reverence for the past.

Now, in our third year of block scheduling, English teachers continue to work with our colleagues across the curriculum—sharing ideas about teaching strategies, learning more about technology, exploring new ways to assess student learning. As we evaluate and prepare to revise our curriculum, all of us are reading Bruce Pirie's *Reshaping High School English*. In this 1997 NCTE book, Pirie writes about change and about the need to evaluate our mission as teachers of English headed for the 21st century. He challenges us to "start thinking about how the things we care about—the reading, writing, talking, thinking—occur not in locked closets or individual cells, but as elements linked into immense cultural fields" (p. 99).

The kind of program that Pirie and others envision is one that calls for interactions, exploration, presentation, and integration of content and contexts. It is a vision of active learning where students interact with texts and with one another with a growing awareness of the relationship of text, context, and meaning. It is the kind of learning environment that requires *time:* for reflection, interaction, and discovery. We must, writes Pirie, "help our students make their minds as powerful and flexible as possible, and that means unshackling the rusty manacles of imprisoned thought" (p. 94). By maximizing the use of time in the school day, block scheduling promotes this kind of reflective and interactive environment. No longer prisoners of time in Bordentown, we continue to work together to confront the fears and challenges that come with change. ●

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Teacher Portfolios and the Teacher of English: A Natural Combination

by Alyce Hunter, West Windsor-Plainsboro Middle School, New Jersey

During the 1990s, increasing numbers of teachers of English have been assigning writing, reading, or literacy portfolios to their students. These portfolios have served to indicate progress toward goals, to record growth in a literacy process, and to help learners reflect upon their own accomplishments. These portfolios have become repositories for such diverse student work as formal essays, numbers and titles of books read, the stages of the writing process, and personal journal insights.

With the institution of the teacher portfolio in many districts and in entire states (such as Connecticut for beginning teachers), the portfolio process has entered the teaching profession as a way for professionals to document their own performance and as a new way for supervisors to collaborate with staff. Teachers of English are in a unique position because they have worked with learners who have produced portfolios. Teachers of English have guided and counseled learners as they collected, selected, and reflected upon their works. Now it is the turn of teachers to mirror and reflect upon the process and portfolio product.

Many educators have never themselves produced a portfolio in which they collect, select, and reflect upon what they do. The use of teacher portfolios aligns professional evaluation practices with current trends in student assessment. Teachers of English know through their experiences with students that portfolios promote student learning, growth, and reflection. Educators can appreciate that the development of portfolios has the potential to increase their own learning about teaching, their own professional growth, and their reflection about instructional practices. They can learn from their students that the production of a portfolio can lead not only to examination of their abilities and craft but also to revelations about themselves as learners and people.

Additionally, the development of a teacher portfolio helps educators understand and empathize with students. For example, a fairly common practice is for teachers to ask students to set general and specific goals for their learning and then to select assignments that reflect progress toward or accomplishment of these goals. When teachers are faced with developing their own portfolios, they often realize that it can be an arduous task to determine goals, because such goal setting makes them decide what they truly value as teachers and then requires them to assemble artifacts to support their beliefs and goals. Producing a professional portfolio requires that teachers exhibit behaviors and learning patterns that they expect from students. Teachers are required to collect, select, reflect; they make choices, take risks, and experiment. When teachers replicate the tasks assigned to students, they gain added insight into process and achievement. So the development of a teacher portfolio can increase teacher appreciation of student effort and achievement.

The use of teacher portfolios aligns professional evaluation practices with current trends in student assessment.

Through the production of a portfolio, teachers also have the potential to model for students. Portfolios provide the opportunity for teachers and students to interact as learners who are sharing a process and product. Teachers can take the lead by discussing their own difficulties in selecting their "best" work or lesson. They can also share their reflection process and ask for students' input about the success of a lesson and what should be included in the professional portfolio.

Supervisors of teachers of English have a distinct reason for favoring the production of professional portfolios. Just as teachers realize that students learn, grow, and become personally responsible through portfolio production, so supervisors can come to understand that this production can establish a collaborative relationship between administrators and teachers. The process and product encourage practitioners to reflect both on their own individual expectations and institutional expectations and the relationship between them. The process and product encourage teachers and administrators to talk to each other about a wide range of ideas and ideals, from the philosophical to the practical, including what are one's beliefs about and philosophy of education, what to include or not include in a portfolio, and how does one manage the array of artifacts. Individual teachers and administrators who collaborate to produce portfolios come to view teacher assessment and evaluation not just as the responsibility of the administrators. Such collaborators view assessment as a shared responsibility for the benefit of teacher, supervisor, and students.

For administrators, promoting this collaboration is most appropriate and practical. As administrators in today's cost-conscious society are assigned

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more and more roles and duties, there is less and less time and energy to devote to teacher assessment and evaluation. It is essential that today's administrators find practical ways to make their own workload manageable and also to make their employees know that they are valued and valuable. The initiation and implementation of teacher portfolios are an answer. This process provides a common ground for collaboration and collegiality between administrator and teacher.

Supervisors of teachers of English know that many times their staff has been involved with and dedicated to the student portfolio process. This involvement with learner process and product can facilitate in teachers of English the understanding of the potential for professional growth and learning that is part of the teacher portfolio dynamic. Supervisors can promote the natural combination of these teachers and professional portfolio development. ●

Floating

by James Kennedy, Sherwood High School, Sandy Spring, Maryland

If experience has anything to do with expertise, I am an expert on the subject of floating: a teacher's moving from one classroom to another rather than working in one room throughout the school day. From 1973 until now, I have been, I believe, a floating teacher every semester of every year. That is not an enviable record. I've been alternately irritated and resigned to the lot. But during my most recent episode of irritation, I decided to make good use of my experience, to "make lemonade" and serve up some recommendations to administrators, school building designers, "host" teachers, other floating teachers, and teacher organizations. But first, let me talk about some of the problems that floaters face.

The Problems

Time strains the floater more severely than it does the stationary teacher. Five minutes—the standard passing time between periods—is not a long time to do what a floater must do: pack up or store ending-class materials, including grade and plan book, student work, handouts, and other books; return or remove equipment; answer student concerns; sign permissions; perhaps secure the classroom; carry or push carts, crates, books, and so on to the next room; adjust furniture and overheads; unpack essentials, such as plan book, lesson plans, handouts, and transparencies; write objectives or agenda on the board; greet students; hear students' individual needs about making up work, permission slips, or missing homework; and be near the classroom door to make sure tardiness is carefully recorded. The most important items in this list—those that involve stopping and listening to what a student is trying to tell the teacher—often get the least attention. A teacher's inability to listen to student concerns does serious damage to the student–teacher relationship.

If anything is clear to floating teachers, it is that most host teachers would rather not have them in the classroom.

The distance a floater travels also can be a problem. For example, I believe I once traveled close to 300 yards between classes. A long float in a short time, carrying briefcase and other items, is physically taxing. And usually that long walk is not a straight one: it zigs and zags, like broken-field running, through crowded hallways. Add a staircase and the float becomes punishing. The longer the float, the greater the difficulty for the floater, and the more likely the teacher's entrance will resemble the arrival of *Seinfeld*'s Kramer rather than that of Mr. Rogers.

Severely limited operating space is another constant for the floater. When arriving in a classroom, sometimes the floater has nowhere but an unstable student desk top, the slanted top of a lectern, a radiator, or the floor to set what down the items being carried. Host teachers' desks are covered entirely (or all but a desk blotter space) with the host teacher's possessions and decorations. Shelves and ledges have attractive displays that the floater is cautioned not to let students handle. Lounge furniture that students are using before the teacher arrives set up confrontations between the floater and the students. Some classrooms are so densely furnished and decorated that they are serious obstacle courses for the floater.

For the floater, daily paperwork can be a challenge. Today's handouts, yesterday's and the previous month's, make-up work, and student work tend to get shuffled together during the hasty packing usually required at the end of class. Special folders, briefcases, and clips (not usually provided by the school) help some, but packing papers essentially becomes an act of shuffling that will require later sorting, especially if there is not enough flat table space

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to keep separate piles during the class.

Courses that require increased reliance on teacher-made handouts, photocopies, and manipulatives rather than on single textbooks require the floater to carry more and manage more. A host teacher can place such materials in trays that stay out all the time. A floater generally needs to stow and tow these every period.

Floaters know well—and anyone who has participated in school construction meetings does, too—that classrooms are designed with one teacher in mind. Architects plan on a coat closet for one, a desk for one, filing space for one. It is rare that host teachers are eager to share readily accessible storage space for one with floaters.

If anything is clear to floating teachers, it is that most host teachers would rather not have them in the classroom. Hosts fully expect that floaters will disappear without a trace and without having erased any of the host teacher's writings from the board or consumed any chalk or staples. Frequently these classroom consumables are locked up, so the floater must also tote these supplies or do without.

Finally, the demands of floating can make a teacher edgy, anxious, and strained before class begins. Unfortunately, the floater's difficulties probably are not too important to anybody but the floater. Squeaky wheels being what they are, I suspect that the very vocal floater doesn't have to be a nomad too many times before someone else is assigned that role. To some extent, then, floaters may have themselves to thank for this peripatetic pedagogical plight.

The Recommendations

Floating will not go away, but some definite measures can be taken to improve the floating teacher's working conditions. Therefore, I offer the following recommendations to those who can help.

It is called floating rather than drowning, so there's some hope in the term.

To Administrators, Schedule Makers, and Business Managers

1. Make sure that floaters have decent desk and other storage space in any room they use. I suggest that the principal guarantee that in each classroom used by the floater, there will be desk space equivalent to the amount of surface and storage in a single-pedestal desk.
2. Keep the floating distances short and stair-free.
3. Give notice in the faculty handbook that floating teachers are to be provided appropriate spaces to work in each room.

To School Designers

1. Remember that academic classrooms likely will be used by more than one teacher; storage spaces, closets, and files need to be provided for that second and possibly third teacher.
2. Change the formula for full-building utilization to allow host teachers to have school day planning time in their room. The current formula is one for overcrowding.

To Host Teachers

1. Continue to decorate your rooms and make them reflect your subject and your personality.
2. Leave an amount of desk surface at least 24" by 40" cleared so the floater can set down materials.
3. Provide the floater with file and closable drawer or cupboard storage place within easy reach of the desk.

To Other Floaters

1. Always start class feeling composed: stop, take a deep breath, don't panic. Class will start eventually. The alternative is to pass your agitation on to your students.
2. If you don't have something (a handout, chalk, etc.), do the best you can without it. If possible, send a student for it and try to spend a relaxing moment with the students; or improvise.
3. Use closable accordion wallets and clamp-type paper clips to hold each period's papers and sets of handouts. Ask the school to pay for these; they are an expense created by your floating assignment.
4. Do not regularly push heavy carts with materials falling off them down corridors between classes. Do not move tables and chairs and other furniture around at the beginning of every period to create some usable space. You're a teacher, not a stevedore.
5. Tell the administrators what equipment and supplies you need to fulfill your floating assignment. Tell your host teacher(s) what you need. Tell your teacher organization what you need. Tell the administrators when you think you have done your fair share of floating.

To Teacher Organizations

1. Collect suggestions from floating teachers in your organization.
2. Negotiate reasonable working conditions for floaters.

If I have given the impression that floating creates hardships for teachers, I have described it accurately. It is, however, called floating rather than drowning, so there's some hope in the term. The hope lies in all parties, including the floating teacher, acknowledging the difficulties, distributing them equitably, and taking active measures to improve working conditions.

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CEL Book *Great Beginnings* Available Soon!

The first book in the new CEL Series, published by NCTE, is scheduled for release mid-summer. Since CEL recognizes that the first few years as an English language arts teacher can be disorienting, frustrating—and rewarding—we created *Great Beginnings: Reflections and Advice for New English Language Arts Teachers and the People Who Mentor Them.*

The insightful collection of essays, edited by Ira Hayes, is a useful resource for teacher educators, beginning teachers, experienced classroom leaders, and administrators. It offers practical advice on subjects ranging from evaluating student writing to creating support systems for beginning teachers. Presenting a wide range of "great beginnings" from the viewpoints of teachers and administrators, and organized around three topics—Memoirs, For the New Teacher, and For the English Leader—the collection also includes tributes to inspirational teachers and caring mentors, as well as candid discussions of how the "real world" of teaching matches—or fails to match—novice teachers' expectations. *Great Beginnings* invites readers to reflect on their own teaching expectations and practices.

To order your copy of *Great Beginnings*, call NCTE's Customer Service Department at 800-369-6283. Ask for item number 18887; price is $18.95 for NCTE members, $25.95 for nonmembers. The book should be available at the beginning of July. ●

▶ NEWS FROM NCTE

Announcing the NCTE 1998 Edwin A. Hoey Award

This award is given to an outstanding teacher, grades 5–8, in honor of Edwin A. Hoey, who brought limitless imagination and creativity to the pages of *Read* during his nearly 40-year career as writer, editor, and managing editor of the renowned educational magazine. The **Edwin A. Hoey Award** recognizes exceptional English language arts teachers for grades 5–8 who have demonstrated excellence in teaching English language arts and inspired a spirit of inquiry and a love of learning in their students.

The winner of the award will receive $2,500, plus up to $1,000 for expenses to attend the NCTE Annual Convention in November; a one-year complimentary NCTE membership; a one-year subscription to *Voices from the Middle*; and the opportunity to present at the 1998 NCTE Annual Convention in Nashville.

You may obtain an application form by calling Laura Burch at NCTE Headquarters at 217-328-3870, ext. 271. Applications must be postmarked **no later than July 31, 1998.** Results will be announced this fall.

Search for New Editor's *Voices from the Middle*

NCTE is seeking a new editor of *Voices from the Middle*. In May 2000, the term of the present editors, Linda Rief and Maureen Barbieri, will end. Interested persons should send a letter of application to be received **no later than November 2, 1998.** Letters should include the applicant's vision for the journal, and be accompanied by the applicant's vita and one sample of published writing. Do not send books, monographs, or other materials which cannot be easily copied for the Search Committee. Classroom teachers are both eligible and encouraged to apply.

The applicant appointed by the NCTE Executive Committee in April 1999 will effect a transition, preparing for his or her first issue in September 2000. The appointment is for five years.

Applications should be addressed to Marlo Welshons, *Voices from the Middle* Search Committee, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. Questions regarding any aspect of the editorship should be directed to Marlo Welshons, Managing Editor for Journals, at mwelshon@ncte.org or 217-328-3870, ext. 229.

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Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

October 1998 (deadline June 15, 1998)
Mentoring and Developing Future Leaders

February 1999 (deadline November 1, 1998)
Managing Change

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Henry Kiernan, Editor, *English Leadership Quarterly*, West Morris Regional High School District, Administration Building, Four Bridges Road, Chester, NJ 07930; phone 908-879-6404, ext. 278; fax 908-879-8861; e-mail kiernan@nac.net. ●

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